2015 COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Sporting News

Minnesota's Briean Boddy-Calhoun

PRESEASON TOP 10

1. OHIO STATE
2. TCU
3. AUBURN
4. OREGON
5. ALABAMA
6. USC
7. BAYLOR
8. MICHIGAN STATE
9. FLORIDA STATE
10. NOTRE DAME

82 FBS DIFFERENCE-MAKERS
13 FCS NFL PROSPECTS TO WATCH

Wisconsin's Corey Clement

253 DIVISION 1 PREVIEWS

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Guns for hire

We're going to press with this *Sporting News College Football* yearbook during college basketball's "silly season." You know the time I'm talking about–that topsy-turvy period after March Madness when some 500-odd players transfer to other schools, looking for the greener pastures of more playing time and better stats. If they graduate from their previous school, they can transfer immediately and not have to sit out a year per the usual NCAA rules.

It makes NBA and MLB free agency look downright tame sometimes.

College hoops doesn't have a corner on player movement in the amateur ranks anymore, though. If you turn to pages 204-205 of this magazine, you'll see what I'm talking about. It's a list that assistant editor Will Long began compiling last year for the first time–and, boy, what a difference a year can make. It has grown to 356 names now, with 285 of them being eligible this season.

College football has gotten into this transfer act in a big way. It used to be that lists like these featured mostly quarterbacks buried on the depth charts at big-time schools heading down to Division 1-AA (now Football Championship Subdivision) for a shot at showing the NFL what they could do at the nearest Sam Houston State or Coastal Carolina.

Not anymore. Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson seemingly opened the floodgates of the NCAA's graduate-transfer rule back in 2011 when he left N.C. State for Wisconsin and the rest is well-reported history. Wilson led the Badgers to a Rose Bowl, won a Big Ten championship and, of course, earned a Super Bowl ring two years ago.

This year, the graduate-transfer quarterback to watch is ex-Florida Gator Jeff Driskel, who is taking his free year to play for pass-happy coach Skip Holtz at Louisiana Tech. Driskel, who mostly disappointed fans in Gainesville last season, had his moments early on with the Gators, completing 63.7 percent of his passes in 2012 for 1,646 yards with 12 touchdowns and five interceptions. The 6-4 gunslinger was considered the top QB prospect in his class coming out of Oviedo (Fla.) Hagerty High in 2011, and there's no telling what kind of numbers he should be able to put up in an offense that averaged 37.4 points and 400.8 yards per game last season.

But rent-a-quarterback doesn't stop with Driskel. Take a look at Vernon Adams at Oregon (the two-time Walter Payton Award runner-up from FCS power Eastern Washington), former Iowa starter Jake Rudock at Michigan and Maxwell Smith, who moved from Kentucky to San Diego State and is being penciled in as an instant starter for the Aztecs. All of those names will be featured prominently this college football season.

It was quite the offseason shopping list for teams looking to get better in a hurry at the quarterback position.

The transfer floodgates have opened in college football. Call them whatever you like–hired guns, temps, free agents, mercenaries–but they're here to stay, and college football is, little by little, becoming more and more like the pros.

Jeff Driskel

DRISKEL: JOHN RADUX / AP

Scott Smith @scott_SNyrbks

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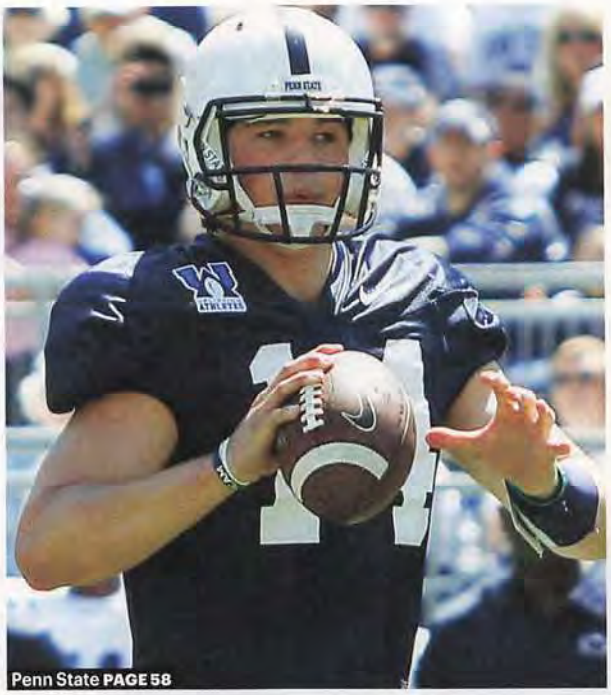

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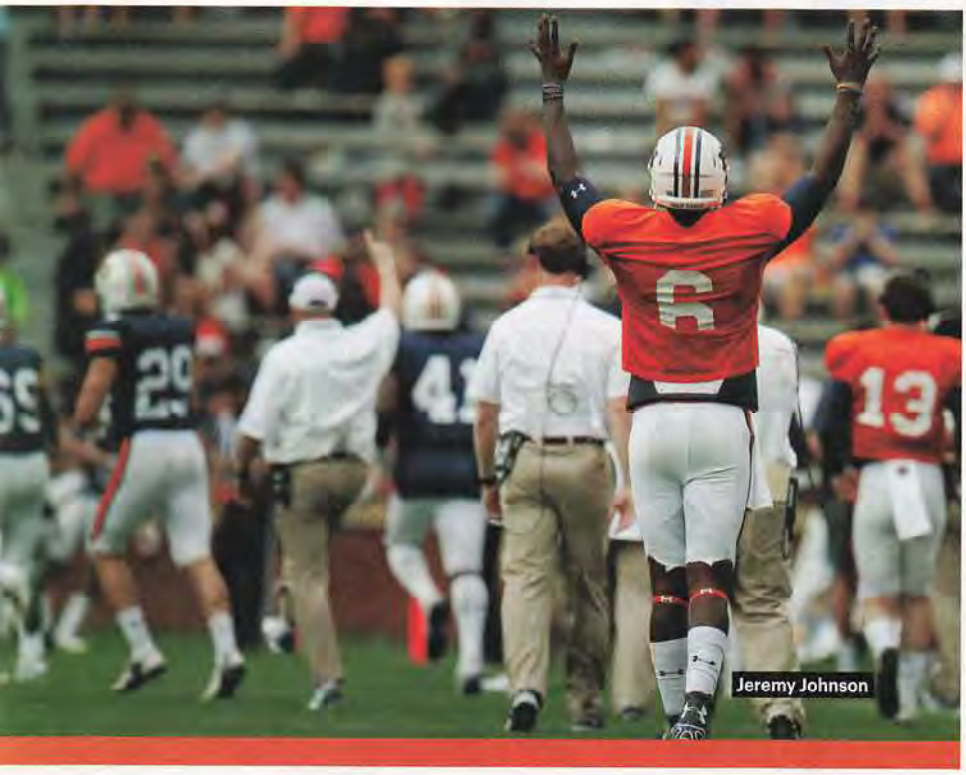
PENN STATE: KEITH SRAKOCIC / AP

Quarterback quandaries

Unanswered questions about one very important position abound across the college football landscape heading into the new season.

BY MATT HAYES | *Sporting News* college football writer


Jeremy Johnson

Here we are, in an era where the quarterback has never been more important in college football, staring directly at the unknown with nearly every championship contender.

Except, that is, defending national champion Ohio State.

And wouldn't you know it, the best team also has the best situation at quarterback. Just in case anyone thought it was going to be easy knocking off the champions.

"We feel really good about where we are there," says Ohio State coach Urban Meyer.

Why wouldn't he? Ohio State has three quarterbacks–J.T. Barrett, Cardale Jones and Braxton Miller–who could start for just about any team in the nation. So while every other Power Five conference favorite–that's right, *every single one*–has potential quarterback issues, Ohio State's only problem is who plays?

Barrett, the Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year in 2014; Jones the 2014 postseason hero, or Miller, the 2012-13 Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year?

Meanwhile, there is this:

- **SEC favorite Auburn** is breaking in a new quarterback (Jeremy Johnson).
- **Pac-12 favorite Oregon** is starting over at the critical position in the "Blur Ball" offense (two-year backup Jeff Lockie or touted FCS transfer Vernon Adams).
- **ACC favorite Florida State** still hasn't zeroed in on a starter to fall in line behind three previous NFL first-round picks (Christian Ponder, EJ Manuel, Jameis Winston).
- **Big 12 favorite TCU** has Trevone Boykin, one of the game's best players, but he's recovering from offseason wrist surgery. Co-favorite Baylor (how can we separate TCU and Baylor at this point?) has Seth Russell stepping in to continue the Bears' impressive run of quarterbacks under coach Art Briles.

Everywhere you look throughout the Power Five leagues, the heavyweights (and therefore, contenders) have quarterback questions: Alabama (new starter), Notre Dame (choosing between postseason hero Malik Zaire and Everett Golson), Georgia (new starter) and Clemson (Deshaun Watson's injury-prone freshman season).

"The game revolves around the position now, there's no question about it," says Texas coach Charlie Strong, who–surprise!–has a quarterback issue heading into 2015. "You can't hide problems there."

Not everyone, though, is dealing with a quarterback quandary. Looking for a sleeper pick for the College Football Playoff? Check out these quarterback-friendly teams:

- **Michigan State:** Connor Cook returned for his senior season with a loaded team whose only two losses last season were to Ohio State and Oregon–the

JOHNSON: BRYNN ANDERSON / AP

two teams that played in the national championship game.

▶ **USC:** Cody Kessler had a Heisman Trophy-worthy season in 2014 (39 touchdowns, 5 interceptions), and the once talent-heavy but depth-thin Trojans are now full strength post-NCAA probation.

▶ **Georgia Tech:** The Yellow Jackets were playing as well as any team in the nation last November, riding the play of QB Justin Thomas (26 total TDs) all the way to a breakout Orange Bowl rout of Mississippi State.

▶ **Arkansas:** No one wanted any part of Arkansas late in the 2014 SEC season, and the run-oriented Hogs' success revolves around QB Brandon Allen, who played much better last season (20 TDs, 5 INTs) than the popular narrative of his struggles.

▶ **Oklahoma:** As unsettled as the quarterback spot has been at Oklahoma the last two seasons, Texas Tech transfer Baker Mayfield–and new offensive coordinator Lincoln Riley–can make the Sooners' offense special again.

"We have to get better at that (quarterback) spot," Stoops says. "You're not winning championships if you're struggling at that spot."

Jeff Lockie

Connor Cook

Cody Kessler

LOCKIE: RYAN KANG / AP; COOK: AL GOLDIS / AP; KESSLER: MARK J. TERRILL / AP

Sporting News

PRESEASON ALL-AMERICA TEAM

FIRST TEAM

OFFENSE

- ▶ **QB Trevone Boykin,** TCU
- ▶ **RB Ezekiel Elliott,** Ohio State
- ▶ **RB Nick Chubb,** Georgia
- ▶ **OL Spencer Drango,** Baylor
- ▶ **OL Taylor Decker,** Ohio State
- ▶ **OL Ronnie Stanley,** Notre Dame
- ▶ **OL Denver Kirkland,** Arkansas
- ▶ **OL Laremy Tunsil,** Ole Miss
- ▶ **TE Pharaoh Brown,** Oregon
- ▶ **WR Rashard Higgins,** Colorado State
- ▶ **WR KD Cannon,** Baylor
- ▶ **K Roberto Aguayo,** Florida State
- ▶ **KR Alex Ross,** Oklahoma

DEFENSE

- ▶ **DL Joey Bosa,** Ohio State
- ▶ **DL Myles Garrett,** Texas A&M
- ▶ **DL Robert Nkemdiche,** Ole Miss
- ▶ **DL Chris Jones,** Mississippi State
- ▶ **LB Scooby Wright,** Arizona
- ▶ **LB Jaylon Smith,** Notre Dame
- ▶ **LB Darron Lee,** Ohio State
- ▶ **DB Vernon Hargreaves III,** Florida
- ▶ **DB Kendall Fuller,** Virginia Tech
- ▶ **DB Jalen Ramsey,** Florida State
- ▶ **DB Su'a Cravens,** USC
- ▶ **P JK Scott,** Alabama
- ▶ **PR De'Mornay Pierson-El,** Nebraska

SECOND TEAM

OFFENSE

- ▶ **QB Cardale Jones,** Ohio State
- ▶ **RB Leonard Fournette,** LSU
- ▶ **RB Derrick Henry,** Alabama
- ▶ **OL Le'Raven Clark,** Texas Tech
- ▶ **OL Max Tuark,** USC
- ▶ **OL Dan Voltz,** Wisconsin
- ▶ **OL Vadal Alexander,** LSU
- ▶ **OL Jack Conklin,** Michigan State
- ▶ **TE Evan Engram,** Ole Miss
- ▶ **WR Duke Williams,** Auburn
- ▶ **WR Laquon Treadwell,** Ole Miss
- ▶ **K Brad Craddock,** Maryland
- ▶ **KR Trevor Davis,** California

DEFENSE

- ▶ **DL Shilique Calhoun,** Michigan State
- ▶ **DL Shawn Oakman,** Baylor
- ▶ **DL A'Shawn Robinson,** Alabama
- ▶ **DL Adolphus Washington,** Ohio State
- ▶ **LB Myles Jack,** UCLA
- ▶ **LB Eric Striker,** Oklahoma
- ▶ **LB Leonard Floyd,** Georgia
- ▶ **DB Adoree' Jackson,** USC
- ▶ **DB Cameron Sutton,** Tennessee
- ▶ **DB Jeremy Cash,** Duke
- ▶ **DB Karl Joseph,** West Virginia
- ▶ **P Tom Hackett,** Utah
- ▶ **PR Speedy Noil,** Texas A&M

PRESEASON TOP 25

Urban renewal

Ohio State enters the 2015 season as a prohibitive favorite to repeat as national champion.

BY MATT HAYES | *Sporting News* college football writer

1 OHIO STATE: This time around isn't about the quarterbacks, despite what the overwhelming offseason narrative will tell you. This is more about how a loaded Ohio State team responds to being the hunted. On pure talent alone, the Buckeyes have more than enough to return to the College Football Playoff. But understand this: The last time Ohio State coach Urban Meyer was in this situation as defending national champion, his heavily favored Florida team (2009) struggled through a painful unbeaten season (see: zero fun) before losing in the SEC Championship Game. In other words, winning isn't always enough. It's how you win–something this Buckeyes team will quickly find out.

2 TCU: As good as QB Trevone Boykin was last season, imagine how much better he can be in Year Two under co-offensive coordinators Doug Meacham and Sonny Cumbie. The defense will be better because the secondary, coach Gary Patterson's annual pet project, has a full season (where it got significantly better in the final month of 2014) of bad and good experiences to learn from. The more complete the defense, the better the chance TCU has to win it all.

3 AUBURN: Just how good is new QB Jeremy Johnson? Some on staff thought Johnson should have played more last season instead of Nick Marshall, even though Marshall led the Tigers to the 2013 BCS National Championship Game and his run threat was a better fit for coach Gus Malzahn's run game. The addition of Will Muschamp as defensive coordinator will pay off immediately; the Tigers have talent on defense–it was poorly coached and misused in 2014.

4 OREGON: What do we know about diminutive QB Vernon Adams–other than his highly publicized FCS-to-FBS transfer from Eastern Washington, and that postgame celebration after a win at Oregon State two years ago? Absolutely nothing. Doing it once as an underdog against an unmotivated team is a lot different than doing it week-by-week in the Pac-12–if he beats out Jeff Lockie for the job. The Ducks are loaded at the skill positions, and the defense returns a solid core. It's all up to Adams (or Lockie) to replace Marcus Mariota with efficient play that limits turnovers.

5 ALABAMA: Here comes Round Two for Jake Coker, the presumptive quarterback in 2014 who never saw significant minutes. He's not the clear leader again this fall, and the Tide (again) rolls into a season with uncertainty at the most important position on the field. This hasn't been the same team since the last-second loss to Auburn in the 2013 Iron Bowl. Confidence, swagger, karma; whatever you want to call it, the Tide doesn't intimidate like they once did under Saban. Strength at quarterback (Coker, David Cornwell, Cooper Bateman or Blake Barnett) can change all of that.

METER: DARRON CUMMINGS / AP

6 USC: Here we are with USC, now more than a decade removed from its last moment in the spotlight (one that was later vacated). The scholarship allotment is full again, and there are elite game-changers (QB Cody Kessler, wideout JuJu Smith, athlete Adoree' Jackson, safety Su'a Cravens) all over the field. The problem: The Pac-12 has gotten much better since Pete Carroll rolled over the conference in the 2000s, and the margin for error has drastically decreased on a weekly basis. Road games against Arizona State, Oregon and Notre Dame will be brutal.

7 BAYLOR: After three straight elite quarterbacks have led Baylor to unthinkable heights, along comes Seth Russell, who might just be the most physically gifted thrower coach Art Briles has had at the position. All he has to do is keep the Bears' Big 12 momentum (back-to-back titles), take the next step into the CFP and eliminate Baylor's postseason meltdowns of the last two years. All with another poor nonconference schedule (SMU, Lamar, Rice) dragging behind.

8 MICHIGAN STATE: We can no longer deny the obvious: the Spartans have arrived among the nation's elite. You don't win at least 11 games in four of the last five years–while consistently replacing elite players–without earning that distinction. When QB Connor Cook decided to return for his senior season, MSU again became Ohio State's biggest obstacle in the Big Ten race–and a legitimate factor in the CFP race despite the loss of defensive coordinator Pat Narduzzi, now the head coach at Pitt.

9 FLORIDA STATE: For those concerned about the Seminoles post-Jameis Winston, understand this: In coach Jimbo Fisher's five seasons as head coach in Tallahassee, he has produced three first-round picks at quarterback (Christian Ponder, EJ Manuel, Winston). Why wouldn't Sean Maguire–not exactly an elite athlete or recruit–be successful, too? Like a handful of other top 10 teams, FSU's only question is the biggest question of all. Maguire's ownership of the position this spring–including embracing a leadership role–is a strong first step.

10 NOTRE DAME: The obvious thought hanging over Notre Dame's thrilling Music City Bowl victory against LSU: Why didn't QB Malik Zaire play sooner? Maybe coach Brian Kelly stayed too long with turnover-prone QB Everett Golson, but there's no avoiding the reality that Zaire brings a power run game to the position and, most important, takes care of the ball. The lines of scrimmage will be stout, and the skill positions more experienced. The quarterback (whoever plays) can't be careless with the ball.

11 CLEMSON: If one player truly can change everything (Johnny Manziel, Jameis Winston, J.T. Barrett and Cardale Jones), here's your latest in line: Deshaun Watson. The only thing that kept this megastar from having a bigger freshman season was injuries. Tigers coach Dabo Swinney says Watson (knee) will be ready for the start of the season with a loaded offense. Can the defense, which finally hit its stride under coordinator Brent Venables last season, sustain with new starters?

12 GEORGIA TECH: The last thing, the very last thing the ACC–and the rest of the nation–wants to see is Tech coach Paul Johnson with a dangerous and dynamic quarterback (Justin Thomas) running his flexbone offense. When the triple-option offense is on, it can embarrass anyone (ask Mississippi State).

13 UCLA: Don't think Jerry Neuheisel is going to give up the starting quarterback spot easily. He's not the elite talent that freshman signee Josh Rosen is, but he has been around the offense for three seasons and knows what coordinator Noel Mazzone wants. If the Bruins can figure out the position, the rest of the team (running back Paul Perkins is a star) is deep and talented enough to get back to the Pac-12 Championship Game.

14 LSU: After all of those years with all of those teams that were oh so close to winning it all, early NFL defections and the loss of spectacularly underrated defensive coordinator John Chavis has LSU on its heels. Instability at quarterback makes it even tougher. But this team is so talented, it might just be able to find a way beyond all that should derail a season and be playing for an SEC West Division championship in late November.

15 ARKANSAS: The Hogs are the X-factor in the SEC–not just the West Division, but the entire league. Somehow a team that won two SEC games was the one SEC team no one wanted any part of in November. With tailbacks Alex Collins and Jonathan Williams, just enough of underrated QB Brandon Allen and an emerging defense that features a nasty front seven, Arkansas might just win the West Division.

16 OLE MISS: Key players (Robert and Denzel Nkemdiche) from one of the nation's best defenses return, and if offensive stars Laremy Tunsil (tackle) and Laquon Treadwell (wide receiver) return from injuries, the Rebels will be a quarterback away from playing for a

championship. You know, exactly where they were last year when Bo Wallace did more bad than good in a highly anticipated senior season. Next up at QB: Chad Kelly, who was dismissed from Clemson, rebuilt himself at junior college and his reward is getting thrown into this moshpit of pressure.

17 ARIZONA: As impressive as Arizona's jump to the top of the Pac-12 was, it was dulled somewhat by two disastrous games (losses to Oregon and Boise State) to finish the season. Still, there is plenty of good happening in Tucson, with QB Anu Solomon leading a dangerous offense and linebacker Scooby Wright the face of the defense. The Wildcats must play better—with more consistency—in big games.

18 GEORGIA: It's too easy to say Georgia will do what it does best: run the ball and play defense. Because at some point—even with supremely talented tailback Nick Chubb and backup Sony Michel—the Dawgs must get production from the passing game. The QB position hurt Georgia in big games last season, and it will again unless Brice Ramsey can be trusted to make more than just safe throws.

19 ARIZONA STATE: Quarterback Taylor Kelly's injury in 2014 allowed ASU to play Mike Bercovici and get him valuable repetitions against Pac-12 defenses heading into this fall. The one thing that coach Todd Graham built his reputation on (defense) has been the one thing that has kept his Sun Devils teams from becoming elite. Nearly the entire unit returns, and must get better at covering and getting off the field.

20 OKLAHOMA: It's a crossroads season for coach Bob Stoops at Oklahoma. A season of CFP hopes in 2014 ended with five losses, a home defeat to rival Oklahoma State and a 34-point loss in a bowl game. The quarterback position is a mess, and his once-vaunted defense can't stop (or cover) anyone—a bad sign in the pass-happy Big 12. There's too much talent for the Sooners to not have a bounce-back season—if QB Trevor Knight can find comfort and consistency with new offensive coordinator Lincoln Riley.

21 BOISE STATE: There's a lot to like about Boise State, beginning with the coaching and leadership of Bryan Harsin. This edition, unlike most of the Broncos' teams of the past, will rely on a stout defense to again lead the "Group of Five" conferences. It's easier breaking in a new quarterback and tailback when the defense consistently gets the other team off the field.

22 TENNESSEE: There may not be more hype or more expectation for another team in the SEC. The Vols finished 2014 strong, found a dangerous quarterback in the final month of the season and roll into this fall with serious momentum (and back-to-back top-10 recruiting classes). The trio of QB Josh Dobbs, tailback Jalen Hurd and wideout Marquez North is as good as any in the SEC. More impressive (and way undervalued): An argument can easily be made that defensive end Derek Barnett and cornerback Cam Sutton are the two best players at their position in the SEC.

23 MISSOURI: Why do we doubt Missouri? After two straight SEC East Division championships, the Tigers still are the team no one will embrace. Don't underestimate the loss of defensive coordinator Dave Steckel (the new Missouri State coach's defense saved Mizzou the last two seasons), or the enigmatic play of QB Maty Mauk (when he's good, he's really good; when he's bad, the passing game is the jump ball).

24 STANFORD: Maybe this is the year QB Kevin Hogan becomes the player that can carry an offense, instead of a caretaker. Or maybe we're too quick to compare Hogan to Andrew Luck. How many other teams would take a 48/21 TD-to-INT ratio, and a QB rating of at least 145 the last three years? If Stanford runs with power and consistency again, Hogan will become that game-changing player.

25 MISSISSIPPI STATE: An important year for coach Dan Mullen and his program. He says Mississippi State can be a team that rebuilds in the SEC and withstand heavy losses to graduation and the NFL. At this point this fall, it's elite QB Dak Prescott and a whole lot of questions (see: new starters).

EX-UAB PLAYERS

NOW SCATTERED ACROSS COLLEGE FOOTBALL LANDSCAPE

By WILL LONG, Assistant Editor

With UAB's football program folding after the 2014 season, players were allowed to transfer to other programs without having to sit out during 2015. In all, there were 55 ex-Blazers enrolled at other schools at press time. Of the departed players, linebacker Jake Ganus has the opportunity to make the biggest impact, as he is in contention for a starting job for Georgia heading into the summer.

In terms of programs, a couple Sun Belt Conference teams benefited the most, with 10 former Blazers moving downstate from Birmingham to Mobile to play for South Alabama and six going east across the border to compete for Georgia State. In fact, you might say the South Alabama offense is undergoing a UAB makeover, as the Jags' coordinator (Bryant Vincent), starting quarterback (Cody Clements) and starting guard (Cameron Blankenship) all held the same positions last year at UAB.

Below is a list of the schools that landed the former Blazers. For a full list of transfers, see "New Destinations" on pages 204-205.

Albany State ▸ 1	Montana State ▸ 1
Arkansas State ▸ 1	Murray State ▸ 1
Arkansas-Pine Bluff ▸ 4	North Alabama ▸ 1
Bethune-Cookman ▸ 1	North Dakota ▸ 1
Buffalo ▸ 1	Oklahoma State ▸ 1
Chattanooga ▸ 2	Old Dominion ▸ 1
Coastal Carolina ▸ 1	Richmond ▸ 1
Delta State ▸ 1	Sam Houston State ▸ 1
Georgia ▸ 1	Samford ▸ 1
Georgia Southern ▸ 1	San Diego State ▸ 1
Georgia State ▸ 6	South Alabama ▸ 10
Indiana ▸ 2	Southern Miss ▸ 1
Jackson State ▸ 1	Tennessee-Martin ▸ 1
Jacksonville State ▸ 1	Tennessee State ▸ 1
Kennesaw State ▸ 1	Toledo ▸ 1
Louisville ▸ 1	Troy ▸ 1
Massachusetts ▸ 1	Western Kentucky ▸ 3

Cody Clements

CLEMENTS: MARK HUMPHREY / AP

Trevone Boykin

Handicapping the Heisman

Here are the 10 we're watching for college football's ultimate individual prize heading into the season—plus five who are waiting in the wings.

BY KEN BRADLEY | *Sporting News* college football editor

1 TREVONE BOYKIN, QB, TCU

If a Most Improved Award was handed out for the 2014 college football season, Boykin would own it. In 2013, he completed 105 passes, ran 105 times and caught 26 passes, accounting for 14 TDs. Last season, with coach Gary Patterson going all-in with the all-out offensive attack, Boykin became the full-time QB and threw for 3,714 yards, ran for 659 and was responsible for 39 TDs. He should be better in 2015.

2 CARDALE JONES, QB, OHIO STATE

Yes, we know this much: Only one player can win the Heisman Trophy. And this, too: It's unlikely two quarterbacks from the same team can compete for college football's most prestigious award. That's not even taking into account Braxton Miller. But you can't ignore what Jones did in three games—the Big Ten Championship, the CFP semifinal and the CFP title game. He won them, threw for 742 yards and five TDs and gained nearly 100 more yards on the ground. He has to start for Urban Meyer, right?

3 J.T. BARRETT, QB, OHIO STATE

If things had gone according to plan in 2014, Barrett would have watched Braxton Miller win the Heisman and get the Buckeyes into the first College Football Playoff. Instead, Miller was injured, Barrett stepped in, carried Ohio State to a playoff berth (credit the topper to Cardale Jones) before suffering a season-ending injury in the regular-season finale against Michigan. Barrett put up record-breaking numbers—imagine what he'll do with an offseason to mentally and physically prepare to run Urban Meyer's offense. That is, if he wins the starting job.

4 NICK CHUBB, RB, GEORGIA

In Georgia's first five games of 2014, he had 31 carries for 224 yards and two TDs. When Todd Gurley was suspended and injured, Chubb became the lead back and ran for at least 113 yards in each of the Bulldogs' final seven games. He totaled 1,281 yards and 12 TDs and also proved capable of catching the ball out of the backfield. He's a mess to tackle and wears on defenses as the game progresses. He should have backfield help to keep him from carrying the ball 68 times in back-to-back games—like he did in wins vs. Missouri and Arkansas.

5 EZEKIEL ELLIOTT, RB, OHIO STATE

Make no mistake, while all the attention in Columbus surrounds which quarterback will get the most snaps in 2015, it's Elliott who makes Urban Meyer's offense so efficient. Yes, the quarterbacks are spectacular, but without Elliott's ability to grind for yards and break the big one, the Buckeyes aren't clear-cut favorites to win it all again this year. In OSU's final three games, he ran for 220, 230 and 246 yards, respectively, with eight touchdowns.

6 DESHAUN WATSON, QB, CLEMSON

Watson's body of work is basically four games in 2014. He completed 67.9 percent of his passes for 266 yards in coming off the bench and nearly leading Clemson past Florida State. He threw for 435 yards and six TDs in beating North Carolina and had two passing TDs and two on the ground in beating N.C. State. He was 14-for-19 for 269 yards, two TDs and two rushing scores while playing with a torn ACL in beating South Carolina. When he's healthy—or just sort of healthy—he's as dynamic a playmaker as there is in the country.

7 DAK PRESCOTT, QB, MISSISSIPPI STATE

Prescott was one of the Heisman front-runners for a good part of 2014. It looked like he could move on to the NFL but, after the season ended with losses in two of the Bulldogs' final three games, Prescott decided to take another run at getting MSU to the playoffs and improving his draft stock. There's no question that he can do it all. Prescott threw for 2,987 yards and 24 TDs and ran for 939 yards and 13 more scores in 2014.

8 SAMAJE PERINE, RB, OKLAHOMA

Coaches never know what they'll get from a true freshman until he takes the field and gets hit by the big boys. It's a good thing for Perine that he arrived in Norman pretty big already (5-11, 237 pounds). He carried the ball just 32 times (for 177 yards, TD) in Oklahoma's first three games of 2014. He then became the go-to guy with a 34-carry, 242-yard, four-TD performance against West Virginia. Then, against Kansas, he rushed for a single-game-record 427 yards with five TDs. He ran for 791 yards and 10 TDs in OU's final three games of the regular season. Yes, that's Heisman level.

9 ROYCE FREEMAN, RB, OREGON

Much like Samaje Perine, Freeman received carries early on last season, just not the bulk of them. His first 100-yard game came in Oregon's sixth of the campaign, a 121-yard effort against UCLA. From there, he ran for 169, 112, 98, 99, 105, 135 and 137 yards, respectively, in becoming a perfect complement to Heisman-winning QB Marcus Mariota. Expect Freeman to get more carries in 2015—at 6-0 and 230 pounds he can carry the load—and the Heisman spotlight will keep shining in Eugene.

10 CODY KESSLER, QB, USC

The junior made marked improvements from 2013 to 2014. His completion percentage rose (65.4 percent to 70.7), his passing yardage increased (2,967 to 3,505), his TDs went up (20 to 39) and his interceptions went down (7 to 5). If he continues that improvement in 2015, you'll see him in New York.

5 MORE TO WATCH

- **DALVIN COOK,** RB, Florida State: If he plays anything like he did as a true freshman, there's a good bet he quickly climbs this list.
- **JAMES CONNER,** RB, Pittsburgh: One of the nation's top runners. Can he push toward a 2,000-yard season?
- **SCOOBY WRIGHT,** LB, Arizona: We have to place a defender on this list, right? Wright's that guy.
- **CONNOR COOK,** QB, Michigan State: Experienced on a team with a scheme he excels in—Cook quietly can become a Heisman contender.
- **RASHARD HIGGINS,** WR, Colorado State: The nation's top returning receiver, but how much will he progress with coach Jim McElwain gone to Florida?

BOYKIN: ORLIN WAGNER / AP

Dotting the i

Factoring in facilities, coaching, recruiting bases and fan support, Ohio State tops our annual list of college football's top overall programs.

BY MATT HAYES

It seemed innocent enough. There was Jameis Winston, after accepting a few NFL Combine coaching tips from new Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh, breaking into impromptu praise for all things Maize-and-Blue.

"Florida State, we're a very prestigious school," Winston told the University of Michigan athletics site MGoBlue.com. "We have nice stuff, but we don't have this. They're so much more advanced than us."

Suddenly, it was hip to be Michigan again.

Hot new coach, sparkling, state-of-the-art facilities and all of six Big Ten wins over the last two seasons.

But Winston's bold statement also underscored this reality: building an elite program is as much about who is coaching as what's in place around him. Like it or not, a program can have everything in place to be successful, and then Brady Hoke comes along and the next thing you know, you may as well be Central Michigan.

No offense, Chippewas.

As we head into the 2015 season, we break down the top 10 programs in college football with the understanding that it's more than just bricks and mortar and recruiting bases.

1 OHIO STATE

Facilities? As good as any program in the college game. Recruiting base? Strong, and increasing with coach Urban Meyer's ability to recruit in the talent-rich states of Georgia and Florida. Then there's the coaching staff: Meyer's success at Florida (and eventual decline) can be traced to his staff (and eventually losing assistants to head-coaching jobs). How he handles the transition this time around will be critical to sustained success.

2 TEXAS

So the Longhorns haven't been relevant since 2009. Big deal. Walk around the football facilities in Austin; NFL teams are envious. Players (and coaches) lack for nothing, and have their own television network. They're also the big dog (sorry, Texas A&M) in the state that pumps out more FBS talent than any other. When the Longhorns have it rolling with the right coach (see that?), recruits beg to play for them. Mack Brown was there in the early and mid-2000s; Charlie Strong will get there, too.

3 USC

The brand is so powerful that it has overcome debilitating scholarship cuts that would have gutted many other programs. Think about this: rock-bottom for the Trojans was 2013, when they fired their coach in the middle of the season—and still won 10 games. Weeks later, new coach Steve Sarkisian landed a top-10 recruiting class. A year after that, while recruiting without the cloud of probation, Sarkisian landed the No. 1 class in the nation.

4 LSU

No other program in college football has been so depleted by early entries to the NFL (17 in last two years alone), and still continued to play at such a high level. That's a credit to not only coach Les Miles and his staff, but to the program's ability to attract players with the foundation in place. There's no better stadium in college football, and the state of Louisiana is wildly underrated for high school talent.

5 FLORIDA

A year or two ago, Florida is No. 2 or 3, and an argument could be made for No. 1. The geographic footprint for recruiting is unrivaled, the Gators are still the marquee academic/athletic school in the SEC and Steve Spurrier and Urban Meyer made it a destination. The downturn under Will Muschamp was significant, but so are the aging facilities. Florida has plans for a new outdoor practice facility, but the upgrades can't stop there—especially considering what's going on in the rest of the SEC.

6 MICHIGAN

A year ago, you'd laugh at the very thought of it. But think of Michigan as a loaf of bread: old yeast leaves the loaf dense, heavy and inedible. Fresh yeast raises everything. New coach Jim Harbaugh is your fresh yeast; he's the one guy who walks into the room and there is instant credibility. With that, everything that always has been in place to support winning looks a whole lot better. No other hire could have done that for Michigan.

7 ALABAMA

This program is the absolute, unequivocal example of the power of one coach. Before Nick Saban arrived, Alabama had fallen into the trap of coaches who didn't work—and a program that was in decay on and off the field. Saban arrives and wins, and the facilities are upgraded, the stadium becomes a palace and Alabama's recruiting base is wherever Saban says it is. That doesn't happen with Mike Shula or Dennis Franchione or Mike DuBose.

8 FLORIDA STATE

Another example of the power of a coach. For all the good Bobby Bowden did at FSU—he built the dadgum place—it had fallen off as his career wound down. The product wasn't good, and the foundation and support around it was tired and worn. Credit the university with making a commitment to build and upgrade facilities and support for Fisher, and for seeing what Fisher could bring (and not letting him get away). All things being equal, FSU is a close second to Florida in recruiting the talent-rich state. But all things, clearly, are not equal right now.

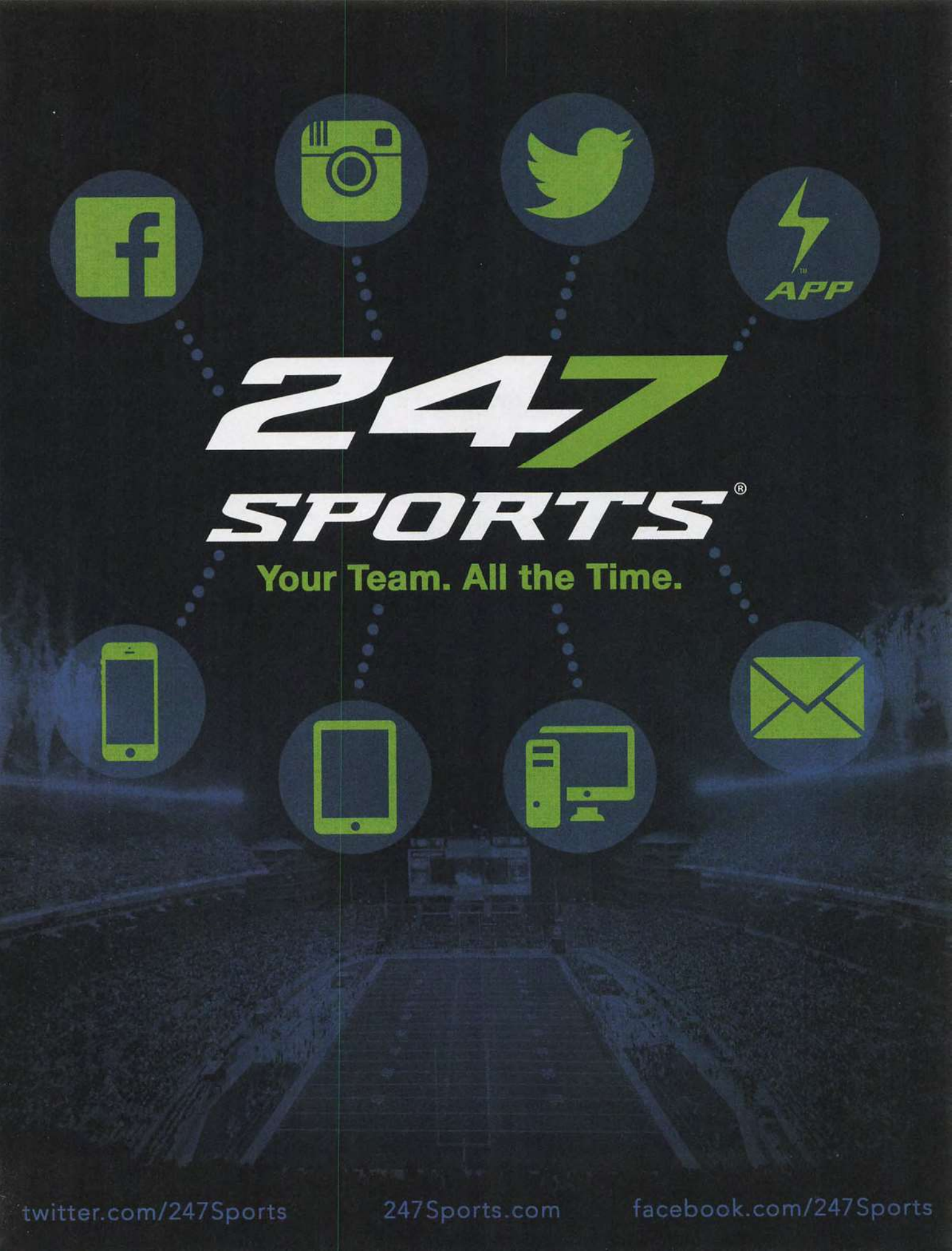
9 OREGON

Money makes everything better. Before Nike king Phil Knight got involved, Oregon was an afterthought of a program. Now the Ducks, with Knight's money and state-of-the-art facilities, are one of the hottest names in college sports. The brand that Knight built with cash—and coaches Mike Bellotti, Chip Kelly and Mark Helfrich have developed on the field—has allowed this program to rise among the elite despite its less-than-average recruiting base in the Northwest. The brand is so good that Oregon recruits (successfully) on a national level.

10 NOTRE DAME

There is still the natural draw of Notre Dame, of tradition and history and pageantry. The rest of the program must catch up (hello, stadium upgrades). The days of high school players dreaming to play for Notre Dame are gone. The Irish are battling in recruiting trenches like everyone else, where sustained success is the key to making it all work. Think about this: the year coach Brian Kelly got the Irish to the national title game, Will Muschamp was a Notre Dame loss from getting Florida there. That's how quickly it can turn, especially considering not much has happened since for Kelly.

OHIO STATE BAND: JAY LAPRETE / AP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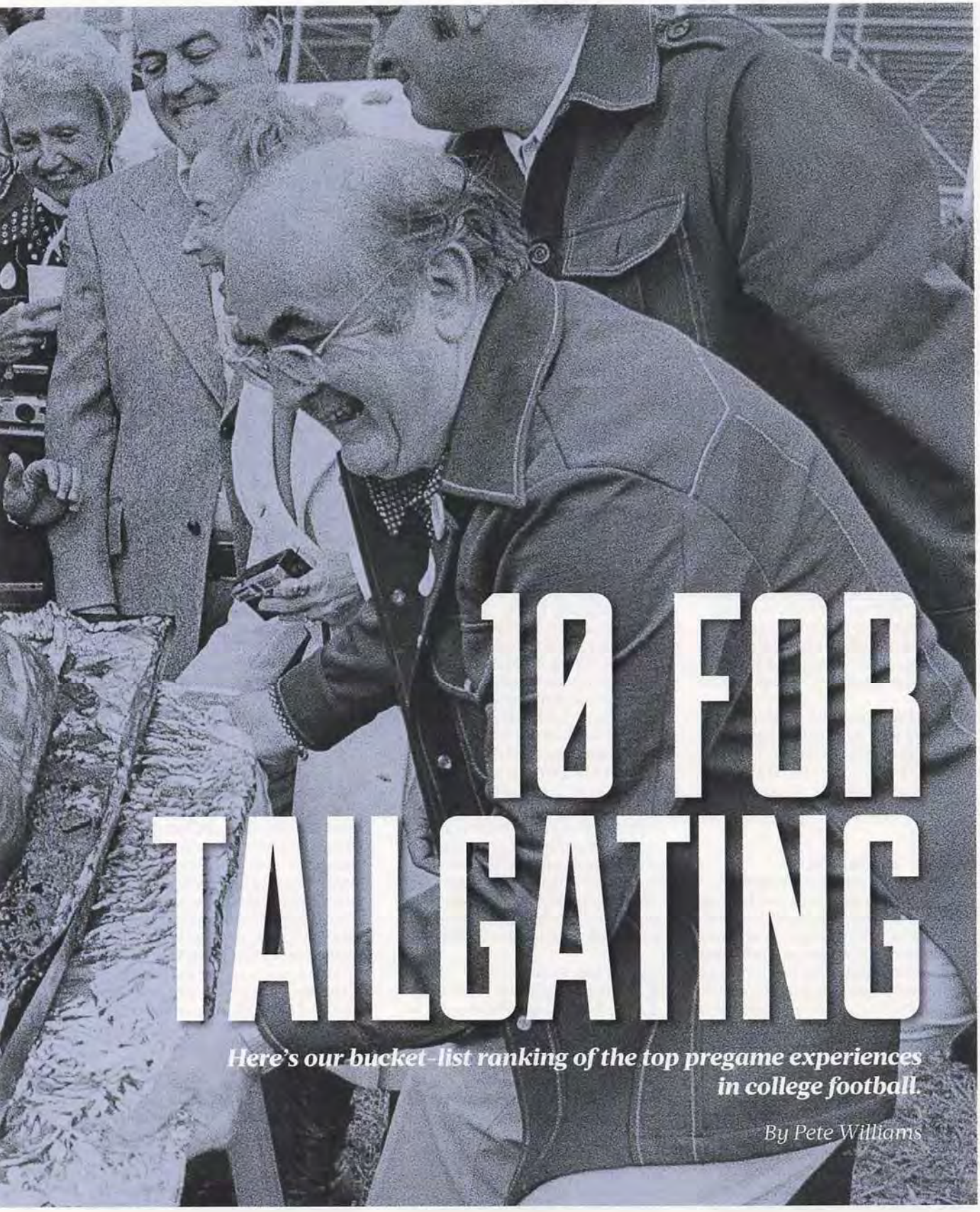


10 FOR TAILGATING

Here's our bucket-list ranking of the top pregame experiences in college football.

By Pete Williams

Florida/Georgia game

Clemson

Washington

College football, more than any other sports event, is about more than just the game. It's about weekends (some three or four days long), highlighted by a massive tailgate experience where fans enjoy not just food and drink but game-day traditions–and even family parking spots–that go back decades.

Many fans put as much preparation into tailgating as their teams do for the games. And while the South might have a weather advantage when it comes to tailgating, especially after Halloween, great tailgating can be found all over the country.

For college football fans, there probably is no such thing as bad tailgating and this list could have gone 30 deep easily. In the interest of space, here's our look at what we consider the 10 best tailgating environments in college football.

10. Jacksonville, Fla. (Florida/Georgia game)

Good arguments could be made for both Gainesville and Athens to be included on this list. But when you take both rabid fan bases and bring them annually to a neutral site that happens to be a riverfront NFL stadium surrounded by massive parking lots, you have one of college football's most passionate tailgate scenes, often referred to as the "World's Largest Outdoor Cocktail Party."

EverBank Field, like most NFL stadiums, lacks college-town charm, but the schools bring the game-day atmosphere to the parking lots with live bands, tents and even a UF-UGA Hall of Fame. Before hosting Super Bowl 39 in 2005, the stadium added several party areas and the capacity to expand with temporary seats from 67,164 to well more than 82,000, all of which are needed for the Florida-Georgia game. The stadium sits along the St. John's River and tailgating extends to the boats docked near the stadium. This year's party scene could be the rowdiest ever as the game takes place on Halloween.

9. Clemson

Clemson often seems like an SEC school trapped in the ACC and that extends to tailgating, the best in the South according to *Southern Living* magazine in 2012. The Tigers have returned to their late-1980s dominance in recent years, which has fueled the passions of a town that shares its name and identity with the university. It seems like every resident shows up clad in orange to pitch a tailgate tent on game day and watch the Tigers rub Howard's Rock as they run down the hill into the stadium. Many fans accent their tailgate spreads with Clemson Blue Cheese, created by a school professor in 1940. Tailgating isn't just a pre-game activity at Clemson, which has a long tradition of letting your game ticket get you in and out at halftime. With 81,500 fans descending upon "Death Valley," is it any wonder so many wait out the post-game traffic with more tailgating?

8. Penn State

Happy Valley has such a long tradition with tailgating that it inspired both a documentary and a cookbook in the 1980s. Tailgating gets under way early around "Nittanyville" (formerly "Paternoville") from the tent city students put up several days before game day to get the best seats in the student section to the RV lot outside Beaver Stadium, which opens at 6 p.m. on the Thursday before home games. Since most RVs are white, the sea of hulking vehicles only adds to the blue-and-white ambience of multi-generation alumni tailgating. It's no surprise that a school with 106,572-seat Beaver Stadium has some of the nation's largest tailgating fields, including a few where animals roam during the week. Throw in one of college football's best marching bands performing pregame and the endless chants of "We are ... Penn State!" and the Nittany Lion tailgate is memorable whether you have a ticket to the game or not.

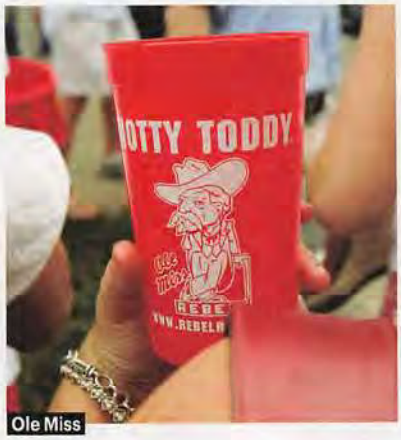
7. Texas A&M

Nobody starts game day earlier than the Aggies, who get under way with the "Midnight Yell" pep rally at Kyle Field that dates back to 1913. At the end of this yell practice, the stadium lights go out and Aggies kiss their dates. By the time the sun comes up, College Station has become a full-blown tailgate scene with more than 100,000 maroon-clad fans firing up Texas-style barbecue. There's also the Aggie Fan Zone, a pedestrian-only area adjacent to the stadium that opens three and a half hours before kickoff. An hour later is the team arrival and "Spirit Walk" to the locker room, followed by the Corps March-In, where the Corps of Cadets steps off the quad to the boom of a cannon and marches behind the Aggie Band to Kyle Field. There students stand all game, creating the legendary "12th Man" cacophony that contributes to Texas A&M being one of the most well-rounded, we've-got-it-all game-day experiences in college football.

6. Washington

Seattle isn't exactly a college football hotbed and the Huskies have posted just one 10-win season since 1991. But the waterfront Husky Stadium attracts a flotilla of boats on game days that form a giant, upscale tailgate party that's both the best way to

FLORIDA/GEORGIA: STEPHEN B. MORTON / AP; CLEMSON: BURK EVERONE / AP; WASHINGTON: TED S. WARREN / AP



Ole Miss

Wisconsin

LSU

arrive at a football game and the easiest to beat the traffic. Unlike the canoes and kayaks floating beyond right field at San Francisco's McCovey Cove, the vessels that show up in Husky Harbor are more of the mid-six figure and up variety, though some fans arrive via large charters or personal watercraft. Huskies fans have spectacular views (Cascade Mountains, Olympic Mountains) and draw from the Pacific Northwest for a seafood "boatgate" spread. Some fans never make it into the stadium, preferring to watch on flat-screens in yachts that in some cases are bigger and plusher than the suites inside.

5 Notre Dame

Arguably the "mecca" of college football, Notre Dame offers a game-day experience unlike any other and that extends to tailgating. There are the signature landmarks like Touchdown Jesus, the golden dome, the grotto and the ghosts of legends that supposedly roam the campus. On football Fridays, fans can walk the same tunnel to the field that every Notre Dame team has gone through since 1931. The school's famed Glee Club performs on Fridays and game days. So does the 380-member band, which marches to the stadium 45 minutes before kickoff accompanied by the Irish Guard, cheerleaders and the leprechaun mascot. You can even throw the ball around at the team's practice field, which is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on game days. Sure it will be much colder in South Bend than anywhere in the SEC in November, but that only adds to the atmosphere, which even the most avid Notre Dame haters concede is pretty special.

4 Tennessee

Like University of Washington fans, Tennessee's orange-clad "Vol Navy" has taken advantage of a nearby body of water to arrive at the game in style since the 1960s. But nobody can match the Volunteer faithful for sheer number of fans for tailgating whether on land or by sea, with some boats arriving alongside Neyland Stadium days before the game to drop anchor and roll out the barbecue. Tennessee's "Vol Walk" is not as original or old as Auburn's "Tiger Walk," but the team's stroll along Peyton Manning Pass and Phillip Fulmer Way is one of the better entrances in college football. The Volunteers' struggles in recent years haven't dampened the enthusiasm for tailgating in or along the Tennessee River, pregame or postgame. If anything, it has just inspired fans to drink more Tennessee whiskey.

3 Ole Miss

With 10 well-manicured acres of elms, oaks and magnolias, "The Grove" is the Holy Grail of tailgating, though with automobiles disallowed in 1991 it's actually a sea of red, white and blue tents that start appearing on Friday evening. Students and alumni don blazers and bowties, dresses and heels, and serve Southern cuisine on tables set with flowers, silver and kitchenware. As a kid, future Rebels quarterback Eli Manning once played football in The Grove with his friends not far from where his parents, Archie and Olivia, had a tent. The highlight of The Grove experience is the "Walk of Champions," where players walk through The Grove on their way to Vaught-Hemingway Stadium. It's not the biggest tailgate scene in college football, but it's every bit as passionate and definitely the most upscale.

2 Wisconsin

Badger fans depart from the usual burgers-and-barbecue tailgate fare with brats and cheese, perhaps the most distinct and beloved tailgate food, along with lots of beer. But that's just one reason Madison is one of the best tailgate destinations–even though it lacks the RV-and-tent sprawl of other schools. Some find parking in neighborhoods, often in front of student parties. Camp Randall Stadium is surrounded mostly by student housing and the kids start the parties early on game day. Adjacent to the stadium is Regent Street, a stretch of bars and restaurants perfect for pregame and postgame. The Wisconsin marching band plays pregame at the "Badger Bash," billed as the "best tailgate party in the state." Two hours before game time is the "Arch March," where the players walk through the original Civil War-era structure that harkens back to when Camp Randall was a military training ground.

1 LSU

It's not the only school with a Tiger mascot, a world-class marching band, a stadium nicknamed Death Valley or a legendary tailgate scene with awesome local cuisine. But it belongs in the debate for best in all categories and has the No. 1 overall combination. Game days in Baton Rouge attract up to 300,000 purple-clad revelers who watch the 325-member LSU Tiger Band march from the band hall to the top of Victory Hill, catch a glimpse of the 440-pound Siberian-Bengal mixed "Mike the Tiger" mascot in his $3 million habitat, and enjoy the best food in college football. Tailgating, at its essence, is about the food and Tiger fans enjoy Cajun delicacies such as seafood gumbo, jambalaya, crawfish, shrimp and gator–and not just when Florida is in town. All of it happens amid a festive party atmosphere of tent cities and motor homes that spring up as early as Thursday and continues long after the game.

OLE MISS: RODOLFO V. SOLIS / AP; WISCONSIN: MIKE ROEMER / AP; LSU: JONATHAN BACHMAN / AP

AMERICAN
ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

PROJECTED FINISH

East Division

1. **Cincinnati**
   Bowl Projection: Military Bowl
2. **UCF**
   Bowl Projection: St. Petersburg Bowl
3. **East Carolina**
   Bowl Projection: Cure Bowl
4. **Temple**
5. **UConn**
6. **South Florida**

West Division

1. **Memphis**
   Bowl Projection: Birmingham Bowl
2. **Houston**
   Bowl Projection: Armed Forces Bowl
3. **Navy**
   Bowl Projection: Miami Beach Bowl
4. **SMU**
5. **Tulane**
6. **Tulsa**

Kenneth Farrow, RB, Houston

Keenan Reynolds, QB, Navy

Navy's arrival means first championship game for AAC

BY ERIC BAILEY | *Tulsa World*

The American Athletic Conference has witnessed change in each of its first three seasons.

The league entered the college football landscape in 2013. Last fall, three new schools were welcomed into the conference.

More change occurs this season as Navy becomes a football-only member to increase The American to 12 schools. It is Navy's first league inclusion in 135 seasons.

"It's great that we're going to add Navy, although I don't think our defensive coaches like the fact that we're bringing in Navy," says first-year Houston coach Tom Herman. "I think it helps make The American the most nationally relevant non-Power Five conference in the country."

The Naval Academy's addition allows the league to break into two six-team divisions, with an inaugural conference championship played at the end of the season. One champion will be decided after splitting the league title three ways (UCF, Cincinnati, Memphis) in 2014.

"It's great that we have a conference championship," says UCF coach George O'Leary, whose team has won back-to-back titles. "I've always thought that was something that we want to be involved in."

The American welcomes three new head coaches at Houston (Herman), SMU (Chad Morris) and Tulsa (Philip Montgomery). All are former offensive coordinators coming off of successful stints at Power Five schools. They plan to bring their dynamic attacks to the league.

"There's already some really quality offenses in this league," says Herman, who called plays for defending national champion Ohio State. "That's a lot of history of good offensive football in a lot of these places. Everything just seemed to happen to fall into place where all three of us offensive coordinators had a chance to take jobs when they opened simultaneously."

The league will look to make noise during nonconference play. League schools will play four of the top eight teams from last year's AP Top 25 poll—SMU vs. TCU and Baylor, USF will play at Florida State and Tulane travels to Georgia Tech. Others on the nonconference schedule for AAC schools include traditional powers Notre Dame, Stanford, Penn State, Florida, Oklahoma and Virginia Tech.

"It's going to be a tough league, but I love it," ECU coach Ruffin McNeill says.

REYNOLDS: PATRICK SEMANSKY / AP; FARROW: MEL EVANS / AP; KIEL: NICK WASS / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Anchors aweigh: Navy spent the previous 134 years playing as an independent, but will make its conference football debut with a Sept. 19 home game against East Carolina.**

2015 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Barton Simmons, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RANK	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	POINTS
1	Cincinnati	26	0	0	18	163.32
2	South Florida	20	0	0	18	162.72
3	UCF	18	0	1	16	160.71
4	Temple	24	0	0	13	149.46
5	Memphis	32	0	1	16	148.34
6	SMU	23	0	0	12	143.56
7	Houston	19	0	0	7	128.82
8	East Carolina	14	0	0	13	127.81
9	Tulane	19	0	0	8	124.73
10	Connecticut	23	0	0	11	122.86
11	Navy	24	0	0	7	115.75
12	Tulsa	19	0	0	3	114.92

ALL-AMERICAN ATHLETIC

OFFENSE

- **QB** **Gunner Kiel,** Jr., Cincinnati
- **RB** **Kenneth Farrow,** Sr., Houston
- **RB** **Marlon Mack,** So., South Florida
- **OL** **Ike Harris,** Sr., East Carolina
- **OL** **Garrett Stafford,** Sr., Tulsa
- **OL** **Kyle Friend,** Sr., Temple
- **OL** **J.T. Boyd,** Jr., East Carolina
- **OL** **Parker Ehinger,** Sr., Cincinnati
- **TE** **Alan Cross,** Sr., Memphis
- **WR** **Isaiah Jones,** Jr., East Carolina
- **WR** **Keevan Lucas,** Jr., Tulsa

DEFENSE

- **DL** **Derrick Alexander,** Sr.,Tulsa
- **DL** **Thomas Niles,** Sr., UCF
- **DL** **Matt Ioannidis,** Sr., Temple
- **DL** **Praise Martin-Oguike,** Jr., Temple
- **LB** **Tyler Matakevich,** Sr., Temple
- **LB** **Zeek Bigger,** Sr., East Carolina
- **LB** **Nico Marley,** Jr., Tulane
- **DB** **William Jackson,** Sr., Houston
- **DB** **Josh Hawkins,** Sr., East Carolina
- **DB** **Adrian McDonald,** Sr., Houston
- **DB** **Trevon Stewart,** Sr., Houston

SPECIALISTS

- **K** **Andrew Gantz,** So., Cincinnati
- **P** **Mattias Ciabatti,** Sr., South Florida

PRESEASON MVP

Kiel's college career took time to develop. He was at Notre Dame in 2012., sat out due to transfer rules in 2013 and finally took the field last season. He led the league in passing efficiency and, now that he has grasped the Cincinnati offense, could guide the Bearcats to a conference title.

Gunner Kiel

OVERRATED

MEMPHIS

Coach Justin Fuente has injected a championship mentality into the program after last year's first conference crown since 1971. But with plenty of new faces on defense, can the Tigers maintain their success?

UNDERRATED

NAVY

Navy, as an independent, was often tested by tough nonconference schedules. Look for those experiences to pay off in AAC play, especially with record-setting quarterback Keenan Reynolds running the offense.

2 No more sharing: Last season, three schools (UCF, Cincinnati and Memphis) shared a conference championship. With two divisions, a league title game was formed and one champion will be crowned.

3 New hires get offensive: Houston's Tom Herman, SMU's Chad Morris and Tulsa's Philip Montgomery were prolific OCs elsewhere last season. They now want to bring that success to their new schools.

RATING THE AAC

FASTEST RECEIVER
Demarcus Ayers, Houston
The American's 2013 Special Teams Player of the Year has proven his speed on kick returns and should get plenty of receiving opportunities under new coach Tom Herman.

BEST HANDS
Keevan Lucas, WR, Tulsa
The slot receiver had 101 catches for a stagnant offense last year and could excel in new coach Philip Montgomery's style of play.

BEST PASSING QB
Gunner Kiel, Cincinnati
Kiel led the league in passing efficiency last season, his first as a college quarterback.

BEST RUNNING QB
Keenan Reynolds, Navy
With 64 rushing touchdowns, he is already the career leader for a quarterback and is just 14 away from setting the all-time NCAA mark.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Marlon Mack, South Florida
The bright spot for the Bulls, Mack has a knack for making defenders miss.

BEST INSTINCTS
Greg Ward Jr., QB, Houston
Ward has a knack for knowing when to run without looking around and knows where to make a cut, spin, you name it.

BEST ATHLETE
Kenneth Farrow, RB, Houston
Led The American with 15 total touchdowns last season and was second in the league with 1,037 yards (5.6 per carry).

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED (OFF THE FIELD)
Joey Grant, C, UCF
The redshirt senior is already working toward his master's degree in the school's Sport Business Management Program, and he is heavily involved in community-service activities.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Nico Marley, LB, Tulane
At 5-9, he is one of the smallest linebackers in the FBS, but his ability to take on leadership and make plays can be impressive.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Zeek Bigger, LB, East Carolina
Bigger's instincts at linebacker could make him a nice pickup to play on Sundays.

TOP IMPACT FROSH
Deondre Farrier, WR, East Carolina
A *Parade* All-American, he set a Florida state prep record with 118 receptions for 1,850 yards and 22 TDs in Orlando last fall.

HARDEST HITTER
Zeek Bigger, LB, East Carolina
The inside 'backer had 140 tackles last season, with 94 of the stops coming on rushing plays.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Adrian McDonald, S, Houston
He didn't play defense in high school, but since moving there in 2012, he has created 18 total turnovers in his career—13 interceptions and five fumble recoveries.

BEST INTERVIEW
Tommy Tuberville, head coach, Cincinnati
The veteran coach has a friendly nature and doesn't shy away from "telling it like it is."

BEST COACH AS STRATEGIST
Ken Niumatalolo, Navy
He is the all-time-winningest coach in Navy history and has led the Midshipmen to six bowl games in seven years.

BEST COACH AS RECRUITER
Ruffin McNeill, East Carolina
The coach's recruiting pitch revolves around family, and he often wins over parents with a solid first impression.

HOTTEST SEAT
Willie Taggart, South Florida
With only six victories in his first two seasons, 2015 could be a make-or-break year for the coach.

BEST VENUE
Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, East Carolina
The home of East Carolina—where "Purple Haze" plays while the team enters through purple smoke—has led all non-Power 5 conference members in attendance over the past three years.

CINCINNATI BEARCATS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **1**

American Athletic - East

Gunner Kiel

This has the makings of a special season for Cincinnati football.

The Bearcats return the nucleus of an offense that moved the football last season. All the skill players return, led by quarterback Gunner Kiel.

The defense, granted, will need improving. But depth has been built over the past few seasons and new faces could emerge.

The Bearcats are coming off back-to-back 9-4 campaigns under coach Tommy Tuberville. Cincinnati shared the AAC championship with UCF and Memphis last season and is hoping for a spot in the inaugural league championship game, where one true champion will emerge.

Where does Tuberville think the Bearcats are at entering his third season?

"We're pretty good. We're getting more of the type of players in here that fit what we want to do on offense and defense," Tuberville told the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. "We've got a good team but we need to take another step forward. We need to play better against some of the higher-ranked teams that we play. We need to finish stronger. Last year we reeled off what, six or seven straight (wins), then we lose in the bowl game."

Kiel threw for 3,254 yards last year and tied a school record with 31 scoring passes. The Bearcats return their top seven receivers, highlighted by Shaq Washington, who had 66 catches and four touchdowns last year. Mike Boone (650 yards, 9 TDs) is the top running back and he'll be pressed by Hosey Williams and Tion Green.

Safety Zach Edwards had 121 tackles last season and will provide leadership on defense.

"They've put their nose to the grindstone, played well, practiced well," Tuberville said. "We just need to take another step forward. It's not going to happen overnight, but I think we've got a real good chance to have a good football team next year."

BOTTOM LINE

The Bearcats, under Kiel, will provide headaches for opposing defenses. The key element will be the production of the defense. It must vastly improve from last season. But all the tools are in place for a conference championship run.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Gunner Kiel, QB

The former top-ranked prep quarterback prospect in the nation committed to Indiana and LSU before finally signing with Notre Dame in 2012. Kiel sat the bench that year behind Everett Golson and afterward left his home state of Indiana in search of a starting opportunity. He has found a home at Cincinnati and the Bearcats have found a potentially great signal-caller in the 6-4 junior. In his first season as the starter, Kiel tied the school record with 31 passing touchdowns while throwing for 3,254 yards. His top seven receivers return this year.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Alabama A&M	
S.12	Temple	14-6
S.19	@MIAMI (OH)	31-24
S.24	@MEMPHIS	14-41
O.1	Miami (FL)	34-55
O.17	@BYU	
O.24	Connecticut	41-0
O.31	UCF	
N.7	@HOUSTON	38-30
N.14	Tulsa	
N.20	@SOUTH FLORIDA	34-17
N.28	@EAST CAROLINA	54-46

COACH

Tommy Tuberville
Third year (18-8)
Career record: 148-85

Offensive coordinator: Eddie Gran (third year)
Defensive coordinators: Steve Clinkscale (first year) and Robert Prunty (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 9-4
(Lost to Virginia Tech in the Military Bowl, 33-17)
Stadium: Nippert Stadium (40,000)
Tickets: 877-CATS-TIX
Site: Cincinnati
Website: gobearcats.com
Twitter: @Bearcats_FB

5-YEAR RECORD 42-22

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Gunner Kiel (6-4, 208, Jr.)
RB	Mike Boone (5-10, 205, So.)
LT	Parker Ehinger (5-7, 315, Sr.)
LG	Ryan Leahy (6-6, 295, Jr.)
C	Deyshawn Bond (6-2, 298, Jr.)
RG	Delonte Murray (6-5, 311, Jr.)
RT	Justin Murray (6-5, 295, Sr.)
TE	DJ Dowdy (6-4, 241, Jr.)
WR	Mekale McKay (6-6, 195, Sr.)
WR	Max Morrison (6-1, 173, Sr.)
WR	Shaq Washington (5-9, 174, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Silverberry Mouhon (6-4, 252, Sr.)
DT	Alex Pace (6-2, 295, Jr.)
DT	Cortez Broughton (6-3, 280, Fr.)
DE	Mark Wilson (6-3, 225, So.)
LB	Eric Wilson (6-2, 225, Jr.)
LB	Clemente Casseus (6-1, 227, Sr.)
LB	Leviticus Payne (5-10, 192, Sr.)
CB	Grant Coleman (5-0, 176, Jr.)
CB	Adrian Witty (5-10, 187, Sr.)
S	Andre Jones (6-1, 197, Jr.)
S	Zach Edwards (5-11, 186, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Andrew Gantz (5-9, 158, So.)
P	Sam Geraci (6-4, 217, So.) *Sporting News All-American*

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

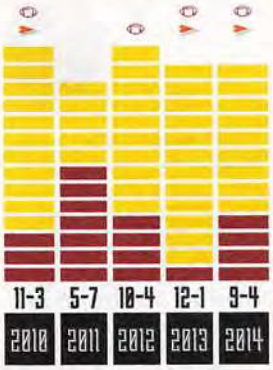
247 STAR RATING

1 Ross Trail, QB ★★★
2 Kahlil Lewis, WR ★★★
3 Marquise Copeland, DE ★★★

Throughout the 2015 recruiting cycle, Cincinnati was often the first and sometimes the only major offer for some prospects around the country. That kind of trust in their own eye landed the Bearcats the No. 1 class in the AAC. While there are elite talents like quarterback Ross Trail joining the fold, coach Tommy Tuberville trusted his staff's evaluation on players like Malik Clements, a big safety that Cincinnati found in Virginia.

KIEL: AL BEHRMAN / AP

5-YEAR RECORD 47-19



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Justin Holman (6-4, 213, Jr.)
RB Will Stanback (6-1, 225, Jr.)
LT Aaron Evans (6-5, 290, So.)
LG Tarik Cook (6-2, 291, Sr.)
C Joey Grant (6-3, 286, Sr.)
RG Chavis Dickey (6-4, 300, So.)
RT Chester Brown (6-5, 317, Jr.)
TE Kevin Miller (6-4, 255, Sr.)
WR Taylor Oldham (6-1, 200, Jr.)
WR Tre'Quan Smith (6-1, 180, Fr.)
WR Jordan Akins (6-3, 237, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Thomas Niles (6-2, 270, Sr.)
DT Demetris Anderson (6-2, 299, Sr.)
DT Lance McDowdell (6-4, 310, Sr.)
DE Miles Pace (6-1, 256, Sr.)
LB Domenic Spencer (5-10, 229, Sr.)
LB Chequan Burkett (6-2, 218, So.)
LB Errol Clarke (6-1, 240, Sr.)
CB D.J. Killings (6-1, 184, Jr.)
CB Shaquill Griffin (6-1, 192, Jr.)
FS Jared Henry (6-0, 208, Jr.)
SS Tre Neal (6-1, 185, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Connor O'Sullivan (6-0, 221, So.)
P Caleb Houston (6-1, 200, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

1. **Tristan Payton,** WR ★★★★
2. **Rashard Causey,** CB ★★★
3. **Luke Hiers,** C ★★★

Highlighted by stealing away wide receiver and former USC commit Tristan Payton, UCF landed the No. 3 class in the AAC. Payton was the jewel of the group as one of the top receivers in the Southeast, but safety Brandon Scott could become a star and is a product of the same Louisiana prep program that produced perennial Pro Bowler Ed Reed. Four incoming linebackers and four defensive ends should give an injection to the front seven as well.

HOLMAN: JOHN RAOUX / AP

Justin Holman

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **2**

George O'Leary and his UCF Knights were coming off an 0-11 season exactly one decade ago.

These days, the Knights are the talk of the American Athletic Conference following back-to-back league championships. And, once again, the team will be hunted by league foes.

"The culture of the program has one goal: win a conference championship every year," O'Leary says. "The kids are hungry and understand that."

The Knights, 15-1 in the first two years of American play, have set the foundation for success. Now they are ready for new players to sustain that.

UCF has good numbers returning on offense but must have new faces contribute on defense.

Quarterback Justin Holman threw for a score in all 13 games last season. He finished with 2,952 passing yards and 23 touchdowns.

"I've been greatly impressed with our offense," O'Leary says. "Our quarterback's composure and poise has gotten better and his confidence level is better."

Running back Will Stanback, an All-AAC performer, scored a league-high 12 rushing touchdowns last season. The Knights will have to discover playmakers at wide receiver. The most experienced player is Jordan Akins. Taylor Oldham is also a player to watch.

The defense, directed by new coordinator Chuck Bresnahan (the former USF coordinator), has a lot to work with on the defensive line but will have to replace four starters in the secondary.

"I think it's the best front four that has been here," O'Leary says. "Among our two-deep, all are back except for one. The biggest issue will be replacing the secondary. We have some athleticism there but we have to see who picks everything up from technique to vision and communication."

BOTTOM LINE

UCF knows how to win football games. It is one of the few schools nationally to win 30-plus games over the past three years. The date to circle on its schedule: Oct. 31 at Cincinnati.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Justin Holman, QB

If opponents think they have Justin Holman pegged, they have another thing coming. Before he took over as starting quarterback for the Knights in 2014, the junior was thought to be a running quarterback, coming out of the Wing-T offense at Stephenson High School in Stone Mountain, Ga. But the 6-4 biology major shook off those limiting expectations with 2,952 passing yards and 23 passing touchdowns last year. Holman's also not going to be limited to just football. He plans to become a radiologist or chiropractor once his playing days are over.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	Florida International	
S.12	@STANFORD	
S.19	Furman	
S.26	@SOUTH CAROLINA	
O.3	@TULANE	20-13
O.10	Connecticut	29-37
O.17	@TEMPLE	34-14
O.24	Houston	17-12
O.31	@CINCINNATI	
N.7	@TULSA	31-7
N.19	East Carolina	32-30
N.27	South Florida	16-0

COACH

George O'Leary
12th year (81-60)
Career record: 133-93
Offensive coordinator: Brent Key (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Chuck Bresnahan (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 9-4
(Lost to N.C. State in the St. Petersburg Bowl, 34-27)
Stadium: Bright House Networks Stadium (45,323)
Tickets: 407-UCF-1000
Site: Orlando
Website: ucfathletics.com
Twitter: @UCF_Football

3 EAST CAROLINA PIRATES

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Towson	
S.12	@FLORIDA	20-28
S.19	@NAVY	
S.26	Virginia Tech	28-21
O.3	@SMU	45-24
O.10	@BYU	
O.17	Tulsa	49-32
O.22	Temple	10-20
O.30	@CONNECTICUT	31-21
N.7	South Florida	28-17
N.19	@UCF	30-32
N.28	Cincinnati	46-54

COACH

Ruffin McNeill
Sixth year (37-27)
Career record: 38-27

Offensive coordinator: Dave Nichol (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Rick Smith (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Florida in the Birmingham Bowl, 28-20)
Stadium: Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium (50,000)
Tickets: 252-737-4500
Site: Greenville, N.C.
Website: ecupirates.com
Twitter: @ECUPiratesFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Kurt Benkert (6-3, 220, So.)
RB Chris Hairston (6-0, 197, Sr.)
LT Stewart Hinson (6-7, 296, Sr.)
LG Quincy McKinney (6-4, 311, Sr.)
C J.T. Boyd (6-4, 302, Jr.)
RG Larry Williams (6-4, 337, So.)
RT Dontae Levingston (6-4, 293, Sr.)
TE Bryce Williams (6-6, 250, Sr.)
WR Terrell Green (6-4, 190, So.)
WR Davon Grayson (6-2, 196, Jr.)
WR Isaiah Jones (6-1, 188, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Terrell Stanley (6-2, 266, Sr.)
DT Demetri McGill (6-1, 310, Jr.)
DT Johnathon White (6-4, 292, Sr.)
LB Montese Overton (6-3, 220, Sr.)
LB Zeek Bigger (6-2, 228, Sr.)
LB Jordan Williams (6-0, 212, So.)
LB Joe Allely (6-1, 239, So.)
CB Josh Hawkins (5-10, 186, Sr.)
CB Rocco Scarfone (5-11, 182, Sr.)
FS Terrell Richardson (6-0, 210, Jr.)
SS Travon Simmons (5-10, 185, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K Davis Plowman (5-10, 185, Jr.)
P Worth Gregory (6-3, 215, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

The East Carolina football program isn't in rebuilding mode. The coaches and players prefer the term "reloading."

Granted, the Pirates lose record-setting players in quarterback Shane Carden and wide receiver Justin Hardy, but ECU appears anxious to see who will accept leadership roles.

"Everything is new, from the staff adjustments to the staff additions to the new players that are going to be stepping up in new positions establishing themselves as leaders on this team," sixth-year coach Ruffin McNeill says.

New offensive coordinator Dave Nichol will have to address a vacancy at quarterback. Kurt Benkert and Cody Keith have been backups, while Blake Kemp redshirted last fall. Benkert played in three games last season, completing eight of 10 passes. Keith saw action in three games in 2013, completing seven of 11 passes.

Replacing Hardy, the career receptions leader in FBS, won't be easy. Look for Isaiah Jones (81 catches) to take command at the position, as well as tight end Bryce Williams.

The defense will be looking for leadership from linebacker Zeek Bigger, last season's top tackler with 140 stops. The defensive line has only one returning starter (Johnathon White). Cornerback Josh Hawkins led all ECU defenders with five interceptions and 11 pass breakups last year.

"The personality of this team will be totally different and, as a coach, you look forward to finding out what that is," McNeill says.

BOTTOM LINE: East Carolina, with eight bowl appearances in the past nine years, expects success. Look for the Pirates to be in the mix for a berth in the inaugural AAC Championship Game.

4 TEMPLE OWLS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Penn State	13-30
S.12	@CINCINNATI	6-14
S.19	@MASSACHUSETTS	
O.2	@CHARLOTTE	
O.10	Tulane	10-3
O.17	UCF	14-34
O.22	@EAST CAROLINA	20-10
O.31	Notre Dame	
N.6	@SMU	
N.14	@SOUTH FLORIDA	
N.21	Memphis	13-16
N.28	Connecticut	36-10

COACH

Matt Rhule
Third year (8-16)
Career record: 8-16

Offensive coordinator: Marcus Satterfield (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Phil Snow (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 6-6
Stadium: Lincoln Financial Field (68,532)
Tickets: 215-204-8499
Site: Philadelphia
Website: owlsports.com
Twitter: @Temple_FB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB P.J. Walker (6-1, 200, Jr.)
RB Jahad Thomas (5-10, 170, Jr.)
LT Semaj Reed (6-7, 300, So.)
LG Shahbaz Ahmed (6-3, 300, Sr.)
C Kyle Friend (6-2, 305, Sr.)
RG Brendan McGowan (6-4, 300, Jr.)
RT Eric Lofton (6-5, 300, Sr.)
WR John Christopher (5-10, 185, Sr.)
WR Brandon Shippen (5-11, 189, Sr.)
WR Romand Deloatch (6-4, 225, Jr.)
WR Brodrick Yancy (5-11, 184, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Praise Martin-Oguike (6-2, 250, Jr.)
DT Matt Ioannidis (6-4, 285, Sr.)
DT Hershey Walton (6-4, 300, Sr.)
DE Sharif Finch (6-4, 240, Jr.)
OLB Tyler Matakevich (6-1, 235, Sr.)
MLB Nate D. Smith (6-0, 230, Sr.)
OLB Avery Williams (5-10, 225, Jr.)
CB Tavon Young (5-10, 210, Sr.)
CB Sean Chandler (5-11, 180, So.)
FS Alex Wells (6-0, 203, Sr.)
SS Nate L. Smith (6-1, 185, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Austin Jones (5-10, 190, So.)
P Alex Starzyk (6-3, 205, So.)

Sporting News All-American

The sports motto—perhaps overused but nearly always proven true—is that defense wins championships.

Defense will be the anchor of Temple football in 2015. All 11 starters return on a unit that ranked in the top 25 nationally in all major categories last season, including being fourth in scoring defense.

The leader is linebacker Tyler Matakevich, who is the FBS' only player with more than 300 tackles (355). He'll be playing behind a stout defensive line that includes Matt Ioannidis, Hershey Walton and Praise Martin-Oguike. Incoming juco newcomer Greg Webb could also make an impact on the line. The secondary will be paced by cornerback Tavon Young. The four-year starter has seven career interceptions.

P.J. Walker will lead the Owls' offense. The junior quarterback threw for 2,317 yards and 13 touchdowns last season. Look for increased production from running back Jahad Thomas (a converted defensive back), who had 384 rushing yards and 364 receiving yards last year. John Christopher is the most experienced among the wide receivers, but keep an eye on University of Hawaii transfer Keith Kirkwood and incoming freshman Patrick Anderson.

An experienced offensive line, headed by all-conference performer Kyle Friend, could pay dividends.

BOTTOM LINE: The Owls may be the league's dark-horse team. With a solid defense to build around, the program definitely can build on last year's 6-6 campaign.

5 UCONN HUSKIES

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	Villanova	
S.12	Army	21-35
S.19	@MISSOURI	
S.26	Navy	
O.2	@BYU	10-35
O.10	@UCF	37-29
O.17	South Florida	14-17
O.24	@CINCINNATI	0-41
O.30	East Carolina	21-31
N.7	@TULANE	3-12
N.21	Houston	
N.28	@TEMPLE	10-36

COACH

Bob Diaco
Second year (2-10)
Career record: 2-10

Offensive coordinator:
Frank Verducci (first year)
Defensive coordinators:
Anthony Poindexter (second year) and Vincent Brown (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 2-10
Stadium: Rentschler Field (40,642)
Tickets: 877-AT-UCONN
Site: Storrs, Conn.
Website: uconnhuskies.com
Twitter: @UConnFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Bryant Shirreffs (6-1, 216, So.)
RB Ron Johnson (5-11, 220, So.)
LT Richard Levy (6-6, 308, Jr.)
LG Trey Rutherford (6-5, 296, So.)
C Ryan Crozier (6-4, 294, So.)
RG Tyler Samra (6-2, 290, Sr.)
RT Andreas Knappe (6-8, 310, Jr.)
TE Sean McQuillan (6-3, 247, Sr.)
WR Noel Thomas (6-1, 193, Jr.)
WR Thomas Lucas (6-2, 203, So.)
WR Dhameer Bradley (5-10, 173, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Kenton Adeyemi (6-4, 287, Sr.)
DT Julian Campenni (6-0, 302, Sr.)
DE Cole Ormsby (6-3, 257, So.)
LB Junior Joseph (6-1, 242, So.)
LB Marquise Vann (6-0, 226, Sr.)
LB Graham Stewart (6-1, 228, Sr.)
LB Vontae Diggs (6-2, 215, So.)
CB Jhavon Williams (5-10, 194, Jr.)
CB Jamar Summers (6-0, 177, So.)
FS Andrew Adams (6-0, 197, Sr.)
SS Obi Melifonwu (6-3, 214, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Bobby Puyol (5-10, 173, Jr.)
P Justin Wain (6-3, 209, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

A quartet of UConn quarterbacks have one goal this season: to become the next Huskies starter.

Incoming juco transfer Garrett Anderson, returner Tim Boyle, true freshman Tyler Davis and N.C. State transfer Bryant Shirreffs will fight for the vacant slot.

Shirreffs, who sat out last season, may be the one to beat. The versatile quarterback opened the 2013 season as the Wolfpack's quarterback and had a solid spring.

No matter who takes the snaps, there is work to do in Storrs. The team averaged 15.2 points per game (122nd nationally) and only reached the red zone 24 times last season.

UConn will need improvement from its skill players. Running back Ron Johnson led the Huskies with 429 yards, including a 101-yard performance in the season finale. Noel Thomas is the most productive returner at wide receiver, having produced 26 catches and a team-high four scores last year.

The Huskies' defense was a bright spot at times during a 2-10 campaign in '14. UConn finished 49th in total defense (378.6 yards per game) and will be looking to improve under defense-minded head coach Bob Diaco.

Look for linebacker Marquise Vann (team-high 105 tackles in 2014), safety Andrew Adams (96 tackles, 4 interceptions) and linebacker Graham Stewart (team-high 10.5 tackles for loss) to anchor the defense.

BOTTOM LINE: UConn is in a rebuilding process right now. The defense is the key; the offense could be a work-in-progress for much of the season.

6 SOUTH FLORIDA BULLS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Florida A&M	
S.12	@FLORIDA STATE	
S.19	@MARYLAND	17-24
O.2	Memphis	20-31
O.10	Syracuse	
O.17	@CONNECTICUT	17-14
O.24	SMU	14-13
O.31	@NAVY	
N.7	@EAST CAROLINA	17-28
N.14	Temple	
N.20	Cincinnati	17-34
N.27	@UCF	0-16

COACH

Willie Taggart
Third year (6-18)
Career record: 22-38

Offensive coordinators:
David Reaves (first year)
Danny Hope (first year)
Defensive coordinator:
Tom Allen (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 4-8
Stadium: Raymond James Stadium (65,890)
Tickets: 800-GO-BULLS
Site: Tampa
Website: gousfbulls.com
Twitter: @USFFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Quinton Flowers (6-0, 217, So.)
RB Marlon Mack (6-0, 195, So.)
LT Kofi Amichia (6-4, 286, Jr.)
LG Thor Jozwiak (6-4, 323, Sr.)
C Cameron Ruff (6-3, 313, So.)
RG Brynjar Gudmundsson (6-4, 305, Sr.)
RT Mak Djulbegovic (6-5, 293, Sr.)
TE Sean Price (6-3, 250, Sr.)
WR Rodney Adams (6-1, 190, Jr.)
WR Chase Whitehead (5-9, 170, Fr.)
WR Ryeshene Bronson (6-3, 187, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Eric Lee (6-3, 248, Sr.)
DT Derrick Calloway (6-2, 285, Jr.)
DT Deadrin Senat (6-1, 300, So.)
DE Josh Black (6-2, 232, So.)
LB Auggie Sanchez (6-2, 241, So.)
LB Nigel Harris (6-0, 220, Jr.)
NB Jamie Byrd (5-11, 184, Sr.)
CB Lamar Robbins (6-2, 200, Jr.)
CB Johnny Ward (6-0, 178, Jr.)
FS Tajee Fullwood (6-2, 209, So.)
SS Nate Godwin (5-10, 202, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Emilio Nadelman (5-6, 173, So.)
P Mattias Ciabatti (6-0, 189, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

One has to wonder if the South Florida fanbase may be growing a little impatient these days.

After going to six consecutive bowl games, USF has suffered four straight losing seasons. The Bulls have struggled under coach Willie Taggart, going just 6-18 in his first two seasons.

A spring football game that featured only one touchdown didn't do much to boost hopes. Then, a few days later, quarterback Mike White, who started 15 games over the past two seasons, decided to transfer.

Quinton Flowers and Steven Bench—charged with grasping the team's new spread offense—will carry quarterback competition for the starting role into fall camp. Flowers, who threw eight passes in five games last fall, may be the early front-runner.

After losing four starting wide receivers, the Bulls will have to find targets for the no-huddle, uptempo attack. Candidates are University of Kentucky transfer A.J. Legree, Rodney Adams, Ryeshene Bronson and Chase Whitehead.

One major question about the change in offensive philosophy: Will the Bulls continue to use halfback Marlon Mack in the run game? The sophomore was the American's Freshman of the Year and led the league in rushing (86.8 yards per game).

New defensive coordinator Tom Allen will introduce a 4-2-5 look in 2015. Look for former TCU player Jamie Byrd to flourish at the nickel position after posting a team-high 95 tackles. Linebacker Nigel Harris returns after leading the nation with six forced fumbles.

BOTTOM LINE: The defense, under Allen, should show improvement this year. But this season boils down to offensive execution: Can Flowers or Bench do the job?

MEMPHIS
TIGERS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1

American Athletic – West

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Missouri State	
S.12	@KANSAS	
S.19	@BOWLING GREEN	
S.24	Cincinnati	41-14
O.2	@SOUTH FLORIDA	31-20
O.17	Ole Miss	3-24
O.23	@TULSA	40-20
O.31	Tulane	38-7
N.7	Navy	
N.14	@HOUSTON	24-28
N.21	@TEMPLE	16-13
N.28	SMU	48-10

COACH

Justin Fuente
Fourth year (17-20)
Career record: 17-20

Offensive coordinators:
Darrell Dickey (fourth year)
Brad Cornelson (first year)
Defensive coordinator:
Galen Scott (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat BYU in the Miami Beach Bowl, 55-48)
Stadium: Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium (59,308)
Tickets: 888-867-UofM
Site: Memphis
Website: gotigersgo.com
Twitter: @TigersAthletics

Paxton Lynch

Justin Fuente, in only his third season, did something no other Memphis coach had accomplished since 1971.

The Tigers, league doormats for many recent seasons, hoisted an AAC championship trophy after a 10-win campaign in 2014. A victory over BYU in the Miami Beach Bowl only fed a fanbase anxious for more good times.

These days, opposing schools are going to know when Memphis is on the schedule. The Tigers, in one year, nearly doubled their win total (12) over the past five seasons.

How will the Tigers handle the newly-placed target on their back?

"It's uncharted territory for us," Fuente says. "We have to do a great job of handling it. We have to realize that we're not a 10-win team. The team last year was a 10-win team. Each team is different, the makeup is different and the mindset is different."

It was a long process, but the attitude has turned around and Fuente is anxious to see how that pays off this season.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Paxton Lynch, QB

As a freshman in 2013, Lynch became just the second rookie in Memphis history to reach 2,000 yards passing in a season. Last year he added a thousand to that total, with 3,031 yards and 22 passing touchdowns, more than double his nine from 2013. At this rate of progression the 6-7, 230-pound junior could reach 4,000 yards passing and 40 touchdowns this season. It's a stretch, but worth shooting for, especially with four of his top five targets returning.

The offense has eight starters returning and will be paced by quarterback Paxton Lynch. The junior threw for 3,031 yards and 22 touchdowns last season. Two of his favorite targets, wide receivers Mose Frazier and Tevin Jones, return. Tight end Alan Cross is also a big part of the game plan. The key may be discovering a new running back. Sam Craft and Jarvis Cooper are early candidates.

"Our guys on offense are older and have more veterans than the defense for the first time," Fuente says. "They need to understand that and take that mentality and leadership."

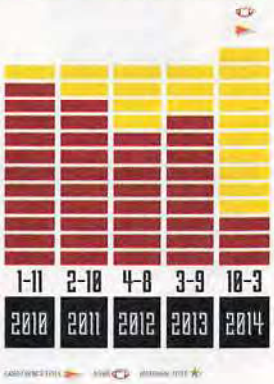
The defense welcomes back only three starters–defensive back Reggis Ball, hybrid safety/linebacker Jackson Dillon and defensive end Ernest Suttles.

"We lost eight senior starters and three senior backups," Fuente says. "We took a pretty big hit and we'll end up playing some young kids. It'll be a tremendous challenge for myself and our coaching staff to get them ready to play."

BOTTOM LINE

The Tigers tasted a championship last year and Fuente is a coach who won't let the team's focus slip. The defense will be a work-in-progress, but the program should be in prepared shape when conference play hits its stride.

5-YEAR RECORD 28-41



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Paxton Lynch (6-7, 230, Jr.)
RB	Sam Craft (6-0, 210, Jr.)
LT	Taylor Fallin (6-6, 325, Sr.)
LG	Tyler Uselton (6-3, 310, Sr.)
C	Gabe Kuhn (6-4, 290, So.)
RG	Zach Collins (6-4, 285, So.)
RT	Ryan Mack (6-5, 305, Sr.)
TE	Alan Cross (6-1, 245, Sr.)
WR	Tevin Jones (6-2, 218, Sr.)
WR	Roderick Proctor (5-11, 165, So.)
WR	Mose Frazier (5-11, 185, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Latarius Brady (6-2, 275, Jr.)
NT	Donald Pennington (6-2, 295, Jr.)
DE	Ernest Suttles (6-5, 250, So.)
LB	Jackson Dillon (6-6, 230, Jr.)
LB	Wynton McManis (6-1, 225, Sr.)
LB	Leonard Pegues (5-11, 240, Sr.)
LB	Noah Robinson (6-4, 235, So.)
CB	Dontrell Nelson (6-1, 170, Jr.)
CB	Chauncey Lanier (5-10, 183, Jr.)
S	Reggis Ball (5-11, 210, Sr.)
S	DeShaughn Terry (6-0, 180, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Jake Elliott (5-10, 165, Jr.)
P	Spencer Smith (6-1, 175, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1 • **Jae'lon Oglesby,** RB ★★★★
2 • **Jamarius Henderson,** RB ★★★
3 • **Brady Davis,** QB ★★★

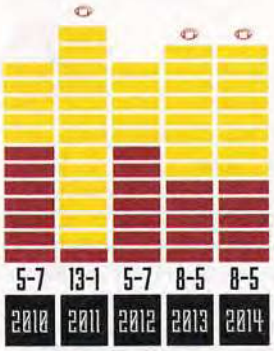
The Tigers' 2015 recruiting class is full of players who made their senior seasons count.

Jamarius Henderson rushed for more than 3,000 yards in the Alabama high school ranks. Brady Davis threw for 39 touchdowns en route to a state championship game appearance in Mississippi. His team lost that game to another Memphis signee, Jamarius Henderson, who rushed for more than 2,200 yards himself and 32 touchdowns as a prep senior. The list goes on for a strong Memphis class.

LYNCH: AL BEHRMAN / AP

HOUSTON COUGARS

5-YEAR RECORD 39-25



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Greg Ward Jr. (5-11, 178, Jr.)
RB Kenneth Farrow (5-10, 218, Sr.)
LT Zach Johnson (6-6, 295, Sr.)
LG Ben Dew (6-4, 315, Sr.)
C Colton Freeman (6-4, 286, Fr.)
RG Josh Thomas (6-6, 315, So.)
RT Alex Cooper (6-4, 297, Sr.)
TE Tyler McCloskey (6-2, 232, Jr.)
WR Chance Allen (6-2, 200, Jr.)
WR Demarcus Ayers (5-10, 178, Jr.)
WR Steven Dunbar (6-2, 195, So.)

DEFENSE

DE B.J. Singleton (6-4, 290, Jr.)
DT Tomme Mark (6-2, 285, Sr.)
DE Nick Thurman (6-4, 290, So.)
OLB Tyus Bowser (6-3, 228, Jr.)
ILB Steven Taylor (6-1, 220, Jr.)
ILB Elandon Roberts (6-0, 230, Sr.)
OLB Matthew Adams (6-0, 208, So.)
CB Howard Wilson (6-1, 176, So.)
CB William Jackson (6-1, 185, Sr.)
FS Trevon Stewart (5-9, 185, Sr.)
SS Adrian McDonald (5-10, 190, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Kyle Bullard (5-11, 170, Sr.)
P Logan Piper (6-1, 200, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1 • **Tyreik Gray,** RB ★★★
2 • **Kameron Eloph,** OG ★★★
3 • **Terry Mark,** WR ★★★

If new head coach Tom Herman is looking for a spark for the UH offense in his first season with the Cougars, Tyreik Gray out of Houston's Lamar High could be the guy. The explosive, do-everything back is one of the best incoming freshmen in the country. On the offensive line, Kameron Eloph and Joshua Jones are very strong pickups and, with Terry Mark out of in-state prep power Lufkin, a big receiver target is coming to town as well.

Greg Ward Jr.

WARD JR.: TOM UHLMAN / AP

The Tom Herman Era begins in Houston.

The former Ohio State offensive coordinator has not spent much time relishing the Buckeyes' national championship. But his goals are similar for the Cougars.

"The really neat thing that I've found is there really wasn't a lot of pushback (from players)," Herman says of the coaching change. "As a whole, I feel like a lot of these kids know about playing Texas high school football and on championship teams. They know what it's supposed to feel like, look like and be like to win championships."

Engineering the offense is Greg Ward Jr., who threw for 2,010 yards and 12 touchdowns last season. The junior is the only scholarship quarterback with experience. He'll be joined in the backfield by a special one-two punch of senior running backs Kenneth Farrow (AAC-best 15 touchdowns, 1,037 rushing yards in 2014) and Ryan Jackson (leading rusher in 2013, 620 yards last season).

"The offense will start with running the football and we have two tailbacks to do it," Herman says. "We have to develop toughness on the offense line and we're doing that. The quarterback position will be interesting. Greg Ward is a much better passer than I thought."

The Cougars' defense has had success over the past couple of seasons and will display a different scheme. New coordinators Todd Orlando and Craig Naivar are implementing a three-man front. The strength will be in the secondary, where seven players have tallied 99 career starts.

Safeties Adrian McDonald (8 forced turnovers last season) and Trevon Stewart (56 tackles, 3 interceptions) anchor the back end. Cornerbacks William Jackson, Lee Hightower and Howard Wilson will be ones to watch, along with linebacker Elandon Roberts.

"They've played a lot of football at the University of Houston and have played it well," Herman says. "We need to develop depth on the defensive line. We have three quality starters (B.J. Singleton, Tomme Mark, Nick Thurman), but we need guys behind them."

BOTTOM LINE

Houston has talent on defense and, if the offense can grasp Herman's style, the Cougars could be a league contender in 2015. The key will be consistency at quarterback.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Greg Ward Jr., QB/WR

It's nothing new for an athletic quarterback to successfully convert to wide receiver, but the reverse is rarely seen. The 5-11, 178-pound Ward started the first five games of the 2014 season at receiver and recorded 15 catches. When the quarterback position proved unstable, the junior from Tyler, Texas, was plugged into that role for the final eight games. During that span, Ward threw for 2,010 yards and 12 touchdowns with a 67.3 completion percentage.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

2

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Tennessee Tech	
S.12	@LOUISVILLE	
S.26	Texas State	
O.3	@TULSA	38-28
O.8	SMU	35-9
O.16	@TULANE	24-31
O.24	@UCF	12-17
O.31	Vanderbilt	
N.7	Cincinnati	31-38
N.14	Memphis	28-24
N.21	@CONNECTICUT	
N.27	Navy	

COACH

Tom Herman
First year

Offensive coordinator: Major Applewhite (first year)
Defensive coordinators: Craig Naivar (first year) and Todd Orlando (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Pittsburgh in the Armed Forces Bowl, 35-34)
Stadium: TDECU Stadium (40,000)
Tickets: 877-COUGAR-5
Site: Houston
Website: uhcougars.com
Twitter: @UHCougarFB

3 NAVY MIDSHIPMEN

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Colgate	
S.19	East Carolina	
S.26	@CONNECTICUT	
O.3	Air Force	21-30
O.10	@NOTRE DAME	39-49
O.24	Tulane	
O.31	South Florida	
N.7	@MEMPHIS	
N.14	SMU	
N.21	@TULSA	
N.27	@HOUSTON	
D.12	Army (at Philadelphia, PA)	17-10

COACH

Ken Niumatalolo
Eighth year (57-35)
Career record: 57-35

Offensive coordinator: Ivin Jasper (eighth year)
Defensive coordinator: Buddy Green (14th year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat San Diego State in the Poinsettia Bowl, 17-16)
Stadium: Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium (34,000)
Tickets: 800-USA-NAVY
Site: Annapolis, Md.
Website: navysports.com
Twitter: @NavyAthletics

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Keenan Reynolds (5-11, 195, Sr.)
RB Demond Brown (5-9, 201, Sr.)
RB DeBrandon Sanders (5-7, 160, Sr.)
FB Chris Swain (6-1, 245, Sr.)
LT Blake Copeland (6-4, 258, Jr.)
LG E.K. Binns (6-3, 282, Sr.)
C Blaze Ryder (5-11, 265, Sr.)
RG Ben Tamburello (6-2, 275, Sr.)
RT Joey Gaston (6-5, 281, Sr.)
WR Thomas Wilson (6-1, 196, Sr.)
WR Jamir Tillman (6-4, 206, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Will Anthony (6-1, 246, Sr.)
DT Bernard Sarra (6-1, 303, Sr.)
DE Sean Reaver (6-4, 255, Sr.)
LB William Tuider (6-2, 213, Jr.)
LB Micah Thomas (6-1, 235, So.)
LB Daniel Gonzales (6-2, 229, Jr.)
LB D.J. Palmore (6-3, 235, So.)
CB Brendon Clements (5-11, 188, Jr.)
CB Quincy Adams (5-11, 195, Sr.)
FS Kwazel Bertrand (6-0, 186, Sr.)
SS Lorentez Barbour (6-1, 194, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Austin Grebe (6-0, 192, Sr.)
P Gavin Jernigan (6-3, 203, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Dear Navy, welcome to the land of league championships, all-conference awards and a consistent schedule.

For the first time in 135 seasons, the Midshipmen will play in a conference. Many league coaches have already expressed appreciation for the Naval Academy's entrance into the AAC.

That thought may not live long once they are on an opposing sideline. Navy, after playing tough nonconference schedules each season, could thrive in league play.

Keenan Reynolds makes the Navy option game go. The senior is already the NCAA career leader for rushing touchdowns by a quarterback (64) and needs just 14 more to pass Montee Ball to set the NCAA mark for all players.

Reynolds, who had a team-high 1,191 rushing yards as a junior, will work with a diverse backfield (18 different players carried the football last season). Senior fullback Chris Swain (693 yards, 4 TDs in 2014) leads all returners. Navy only completed 62 passes last season but averaged 17.1 yards per reception. Jamir Tillman caught a team-high 20 balls.

The Navy defense will be led by middle linebacker Daniel Gonzales, tops among returners with 86 tackles and three interceptions last year. Cornerback Quincy Adams will be a playmaker at cornerback, and defensive end Will Anthony led the Midshipmen with 11 tackles for loss and 2.5 sacks in 2014.

BOTTOM LINE Navy is a very attractive inclusion to The American. The team's history and competitiveness should make an immediate impact in 2015.

4 SMU MUSTANGS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	Baylor	0-45
S.12	North Texas	6-43
S.19	@TCU	0-56
S.26	James Madison	
O.3	East Carolina	24-45
O.8	@HOUSTON	9-35
O.24	@SOUTH FLORIDA	13-14
O.31	Tulsa	28-38
N.6	Temple	
N.14	@NAVY	
N.21	Tulane	
N.28	@MEMPHIS	10-48

COACH

Chad Morris
First year

Offensive coordinator: Joe Craddock (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Van Malone (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 1-11
Stadium: Gerald J. Ford Stadium (32,000)
Tickets: 214-768-4263
Site: Dallas
Website: smumustangs.com
Twitter: @SMU_Football

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Matt Davis (6-0, 209, Jr.)
RB Prescott Line (6-0, 235, Jr.)
LT Chauncey Briggs (6-6, 310, Jr.)
LG Daniel McCarty (6-3, 284, Jr.)
C Taylor Lasecki (6-2, 294, Sr.)
RG Evan Brown (6-3, 300, So.)
RT Kris Weeks (6-5, 314, Sr.)
TE Jeremiah Gaines (6-2, 240, Jr.)
WR Courtland Sutton (6-4, 215, Fr.)
WR Darius Joseph (5-11, 202, Sr.)
WR Deion Sanders Jr. (5-7, 174, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Zach Wood (6-3, 260, Sr.)
DT Zelt Minor (6-2, 282, Jr.)
DT Mason Gentry (6-5, 292, So.)
DE Robert Seals (6-3, 240, Sr.)
OLB Nick Horton (6-2, 245, Jr.)
MLB Jonathan Yenga (6-1, 220, Sr.)
OLB Kyran Mitchell (6-0, 210, Fr.)
CB Ajee Montes (5-11, 205, Jr.)
CB Horace Richardson (6-0, 202, Jr.)
FS Shakiel Randolph (6-4, 216, Sr.)
SS Darrion Richardson (6-0, 203, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Jackson Koonce (6-1, 170, So.)
P Jackson Koonce (6-1, 170, So.)

Sporting News All-American

"Fast and the Furious," the popular movie series, could easily be the motto for SMU's football program.

New coach Chad Morris does nothing slow. From a practice's first whistle to the final huddle break, high-speed is mandated by the coach. There is proof that his hurry-up offense worked for one season at Tulsa and four years at Clemson.

Now he takes his work to his home state, which has loads of high school talent, but SMU is short on tradition-rich football as Dallas' only Division 1 university.

"They're all hungry, they're buying in, they're giving all kinds of effort," Morris said in the spring.

Quarterback Matt Davis, who led the one-win team in rushing and passing last season, will return to his role as starter. All eyes will be on the former Texas A&M player to run an attack predicated on speed.

The offense will need a running back to emerge (especially after a quarterback led the team in rushing in 2014), with attention given to incoming freshmen Daniel Gresham, Braeden West and Xavier Jones. Wide receivers Darius Joseph and Deion Sanders Jr. will be a pair to watch.

The defense, under new coordinator Van Malone, will switch to a 4-3 look. The unit will be anchored by linebacker Jonathan Yenga and defensive end Zach Wood.

BOTTOM LINE The talent in Dallas is there. An inspired coach like Morris should be able to push all the right buttons and, after missing bowl games the past two years, should compete for a postseason spot in 2015.

5 TULANE
GREEN WAVE

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	Duke	13-47
S.12	@ GEORGIA TECH	21-38
S.19	Maine	
O.3	UCF	13-20
O.10	@ TEMPLE	3-10
O.16	Houston	31-24
O.24	@ NAVY	
O.31	@ MEMPHIS	7-38
N.7	Connecticut	12-3
N.14	@ ARMY	
N.21	@ SMU	
N.28	Tulsa	31-38

COACH
Curtis Johnson
Fourth year (12-25)
Career record: 12-25
Offensive coordinator: Eric Price (fourth year)
Defensive coordinators: Lionel Washington (fourth year) and Jason Rollins (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: Yulman Stadium (30,000)
Tickets: 504-861-WAVE
Site: New Orleans
Website: tulanegreenwave.com
Twitter: @GreenWaveFB

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Tanner Lee (6-4, 220, So.)
RB Sherman Badie (6-0, 195, So.)
FB Lazedrick Thompson (6-1, 217, Jr.)
LT Arturo Uzdavinis (6-7, 300, Sr.)
LG Colton Hanson (6-5, 311, Jr.)
C Nathan Shienle (6-5, 300, Jr.)
RG Chris Taylor (6-2, 312, Jr.)
RT Kenneth Santa Marina (6-6, 305, So.)
TE Charles Jones II (6-3, 235, So.)
WR Terren Encalade (6-0, 185, So.)
WR Teddy Veal (5-11, 185, So.)

DEFENSE
DE Royce LaFrance (6-4, 265, Sr.)
DT Tanzel Smart (6-1, 303, Jr.)
DT Sean Wilson (6-4, 265, So.)
DE Daren Williams (6-4, 235, So.)
LB Jarrod Franklin (5-11, 196, So.)
LB Eric Thomas (5-10, 227, Jr.)
LB Nico Marley (5-9, 200, Jr.)
CB Parry Nickerson (5-11, 179, So.)
CB Richard Allen (5-9, 178, Jr.)
FS Darion Monroe (5-11, 197, Sr.)
SS Leonard Davis (6-0, 198, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS
K Andrew DiRocco (6-1, 180, So.)
P Peter Picerelli (6-1, 190, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Fourth-year coach Curtis Johnson easily pinpoints the program's biggest issue entering Tulane's 2015 season: The offense needs a boost.

After averaging nearly 16 points per game last season (ranking 121st nationally), Johnson is pinning hopes on significant improvement.

Returning starting quarterback Tanner Lee, a sophomore, will have experience in the backfield with him. Running back Sherman Badie and fullback Lazedrick Thompson will be asked to take pressure off of Lee. The quarterback's top receiving targets will be Teddy Veal and backup tailback Dontrell Hilliard, who only had one scoring reception each last fall.

Cornerback Parry Nickerson was named a Freshman All-American after recording six interceptions last season. Linebacker Nico Marley (13.5 tackles for loss, 82 tackles) and safety Darion Monroe (73 tackles) will provide the Green Wave's nucleus on defense. Linebacker Eric Thomas and defensive tackle Tanzel Smart also had a good offseason, which could pay off this fall.

The Green Wave will be tested early, with the first seven FBS opponents coming off bowl-eligible seasons. A good start may be difficult to gather, especially in a springboard campaign that could sway the program one direction or the other.

BOTTOM LINE: The offense didn't score 10 points in the final three games of 2014. That's worrisome, especially with a young quarterback and no established talent at wide receiver. Tulane needs to catch lightning in a bottle to improve on last year's 3-9 season.

6 TULSA
GOLDEN HURRICANE

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Florida Atlantic	21-50
S.12	@ NEW MEXICO	
S.19	@ OKLAHOMA	7-52
O.3	Houston	28-38
O.10	Louisiana-Monroe	
O.17	@ EAST CAROLINA	32-49
O.23	Memphis	20-40
O.31	@ SMU	38-28
N.7	UCF	7-31
N.14	@ CINCINNATI	
N.21	Navy	
N.28	@ TULANE	38-31

COACH
Philip Montgomery
First year
Offensive coordinators: Matt Mattox (first year) and Sterlin Gilbert (first year)
Defensive coordinators: Bill Young (first year) and Brian Norwood (first year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 2-10
Stadium: H.A. Chapman Stadium (30,000)
Tickets: 918-631-GoTU
Site: Tulsa, Okla.
Website: tulsahurricane.com
Twitter: @TulsaFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Dane Evans (6-1, 215, Jr.)
RB Zack Langer (6-0, 215, Sr.)
LT Evan Plagg (6-3, 275, So.)
LG Garrett Stafford (6-5, 314, Sr.)
C Dylan Foxworth (6-1, 281, Jr.)
RG Chris Wallace (6-5, 311, Jr.)
RT Blake Belcher (6-5, 300, Jr.)
WR Keyarris Garrett (6-4, 221, Sr.)
WR Josh Atkinson (6-2, 195, Jr.)
WR Keevan Lucas (5-10, 198, Jr.)
WR Conner Floyd (6-0, 202, Sr.)

DEFENSE
DE Derrick Alexander (6-2, 270, Sr.)
DT Jerry Uwaezuoke (6-3, 295, Jr.)
DT Derrick Luetjen (6-3, 285, Sr.)
DE Jeremy Smith (6-5, 230, So.)
LB Matt Linscott (6-1, 212, Jr.)
LB Trent Martin (6-2, 235, Jr.)
LB Craig Suits (6-0, 220, So.)
CB Kerwin Thomas (5-10, 160, So.)
CB Darrell Williams (5-10, 193, Sr.)
FS Michael Mudoh (5-10, 205, Sr.)
SS Jordan Mitchell (6-2, 180, So.)

SPECIALISTS
K Redford Jones (5-10, 172, So.)
P Dalton Parks (6-3, 202, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

Tulsa was on the cusp of being a non-Power Five school that annually commanded attention.

In 2010, it won at Notre Dame. In 2012, it paired a Conference USA championship with a Liberty Bowl triumph.

During the last two seasons, only five victory celebrations have taken place. The lack of winning led to the dismissal of Bill Blankenship as coach.

Enter Philip Montgomery. The former Baylor offensive coordinator was hired to spice up a lackluster offense and inject passion into a stagnant program.

Montgomery's task is daunting. While 10 offensive starters return, the big question is whether the talent is there to run his spread attack. Quarterback Dane Evans threw 23 touchdown passes last year, but he coupled that with 17 interceptions. Highly touted recruit Chad President will push Evans for playing time.

There are some skill players to work with. Senior Zack Langer (801 yards) was second in The American in rushing yards last season, while wide receiver Keevan Lucas (1,219 receiving yards) was a second-team all-league selection.

The defense will be paced by senior end Derrick Alexander (7.5 sacks in 2014) and leading tacklers Michael Mudoh, a safety who made 113 stops, and Craig Suits, a linebacker with 81.

Veteran defensive coordinator Bill Young will be charged with improving a unit that allowed less than 30 points only one time in 12 games last season.

BOTTOM LINE: Following a two-win season, there's only one direction for Tulsa to go. But a turnaround cannot be expected until Montgomery improves the talent on the roster and establishes his offense.

ACC

PROJECTED FINISH

Atlantic Division

1. **Florida State**
   Bowl Projection: Chick-Fil-A Peach Bowl
2. **Clemson**
   Bowl Projection: Fiesta Bowl
3. **Louisville**
   Bowl Projection: Music City Bowl
4. **N.C. State**
   Bowl Projection: Independence Bowl
5. **Boston College**
   Bowl Projection: Quick Lane Bowl
6. **Syracuse**
7. **Wake Forest**

Coastal Division

1. **Georgia Tech**
   Bowl Projection: Belk Bowl
2. **Duke**
   Bowl Projection: Sun Bowl
3. **Virginia Tech**
   Bowl Projection: Pinstripe Bowl
4. **Miami**
   Bowl Projection: Military Bowl
5. **North Carolina**
   Bowl Projection: St. Petersburg Bowl
6. **Pittsburgh**
7. **Virginia**

Florida State coach Jimbo Fisher

ACC schools following Seminoles' lead with stronger schedules

BY CHRIS LANG | *Lynchburg (Va.) News & Advance (Coastal)*
& PATRICK STEVENS | *Syracuse (N.Y.) Post-Standard (Atlantic)*

Each Tuesday last November, the College Football Playoff committee released its rankings, and the entire ACC got nervous.

Florida State kept winning, yet the Seminoles kept slipping. Could a defending national champion that hadn't lost since 2012 really be in danger of not making the four-team playoff?

Ultimately, the unbeaten Seminoles made it to the CFP semifinals, albeit as the No. 3 seed, before Oregon trucked them in the Rose Bowl. But even the thought that going 13-0 wasn't going to be good enough gave the ACC reason to adopt some nonconference scheduling mandates, namely forcing every team in the conference to have a Power Five nonleague opponent on the schedule, starting in 2017.

That wasn't an issue for Florida State, which stepped out of the ACC to play Oklahoma State and Florida. Others in the league weren't so ambitious. Louisville's lone P5 game came against state rival Kentucky. North Carolina, N.C. State and Wake Forest avoided fellow P5 schools altogether.

Those schedules will improve considerably in 2015. Altogether, ACC programs will play 38 percent of their nonconference games against P5 schools, more than any other P5 conference. In January, the ACC voted to allow independent BYU to be counted in that tally as well. The conference continues to have a scheduling alliance with Notre Dame, an ACC member in most other sports.

Inside the conference, expect competition to heat up as Florida State takes a natural step backward after losing quarterback Jameis Winston, along with several other key offensive components. Clemson survived the loss of quarterback Tajh Boyd last year to record another 10-win season, and the Tigers could challenge FSU for conference supremacy, especially with this year's meeting coming in Death Valley.

In the Coastal Division, Georgia Tech is looking to win 10 games in back-to-back seasons for the first time in more than 60 years, and Duke looks less like a cuddly Cinderella story and more like a consistent contender. The division's name brands—Virginia Tech and Miami—will look to contend again after several years of mediocrity.

Virginia Tech certainly got the scheduling memo. The Hokies will open the season at home on Labor Day against defending national champion Ohio State.

Justin Thomas, QB, Georgia Tech

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Life after Jameis:** **Jameis Winston won a Heisman and led Florida State to a 27-1 record over the last two years. Off-field headaches aside, the Seminoles will miss him.**

WATSON: RAINER EHRHARDT / AP; FISHER: DOUG BENC / AP; THOMAS: JOHN BAZEMORE / AP

2015 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Barton Simmons, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RANK	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	POINTS
1	Florida State	20	4	10	6	286.76
2	Clemson	25	3	9	11	278.16
3	Miami	22	0	5	16	215.70
4	North Carolina	19	0	4	15	214.08
5	Virginia Tech	24	0	4	20	213.73
6	N.C. State	23	0	4	18	207.55
7	Louisville	25	0	2	21	200.41
8	Georgia Tech	27	0	0	27	185.72
9	Virginia	23	0	1	22	179.54
10	Duke	18	0	1	15	175.85
11	Wake Forest	25	0	0	22	174.82
12	Syracuse	28	0	0	24	169.14
13	Pittsburgh	14	0	2	12	166.29
14	Boston College	25	0	0	24	166.13

ALL-ACC

OFFENSE

- QB **Deshaun Watson,** So., Clemson
- RB **James Conner,** Jr., Pittsburgh
- RB **Dalvin Cook,** So., Florida State
- OL **Roderick Johnson,** So., Florida State
- OL **Dorian Johnson,** Jr., Pittsburgh
- OL **Matt Skura,** Sr., Duke
- OL **Landon Turner,** Sr., North Carolina
- OL **Bryan Chamberlain,** Sr., Georgia Tech
- TE **Bucky Hodges,** So., Virginia Tech
- WR **Tyler Boyd,** Jr., Pittsburgh
- WR **Artavis Scott,** So., Clemson

DEFENSE

- DL **Dadi Nicolas,** Sr., Virginia Tech
- DL **Adam Gotsis,** Sr., Georgia Tech
- DL **Corey Marshall,** Sr., Virginia Tech
- DL **Sheldon Rankins,** Sr., Louisville
- LB **Terrance Smith,** Sr., Florida State
- LB **Kelby Brown,** Sr., Duke
- LB **Keith Kelsey,** Jr., Louisville
- DB **Jalen Ramsey,** Jr., Florida State
- DB **Kendall Fuller,** Jr., Virginia Tech
- DB **Jeremy Cash,** Sr., Duke
- DB **Quin Blanding,** So., Virginia

SPECIALISTS

- K **Roberto Aguayo,** Jr., Florida State
- P **Alexander Kinal,** Sr., Wake Forest

PRESEASON MVP

The sophomore underwent ACL surgery in December, so it's possible he isn't fully healthy in time for preseason camp. But when he's cleared, he will provide a jolt to a Clemson offense that often sputtered when he wasn't on the field last year. The Tigers need him if they harbor playoff aspirations.

Deshaun Watson

OVERRATED

FLORIDA STATE

The Seminoles got out of a lot of late-game jams last year, but the exit of Jameis Winston and four offensive line starters makes a three- or four-loss season more than plausible.

UNDERRATED

NORTH CAROLINA

But only if new coordinator Gene Chizik can fix the Tar Heels' broken defense. That's a big caveat for a team that gave up 40 points on five occasions in 2014 and often appeared disengaged.

2 Coastal chaos, again?: Are Georgia Tech and Duke that much better than the rest of the Coastal, and can anyone among Miami, North Carolina and Virginia Tech shake off a disappointing 2014?

3 A barometer in Blacksburg: Virginia Tech rattled off seven straight 10-win seasons from 2004 to 2011, but is 22-17 since. Are those results the new norm or will the Hokies be a Top 25 team again?

RATING THE ACC

FASTEST RECEIVER
Tyler Boyd, Pittsburgh
One of three juniors who figure to be the central figures on Pat Narduzzi's first Panther team.

BEST HANDS
Artavis Scott, WR, Clemson
The sophomore ranked fourth in the ACC in receptions last season, quickly emerging as perhaps Deshaun Watson's favorite target.

BEST PASSING QB
Deshaun Watson, Clemson
He set a high bar as a freshman, completing 67.9 percent of his passes and throwing for 14 TDs and two INTs.

BEST RUNNING QB
Justin Thomas, Georgia Tech
Arguably the most ideal fit to run the option in the Paul Johnson Era, Thomas rushed for 1,086 yards and eight TDs last season.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Dalvin Cook, Florida State
It became impossible for the Seminoles to keep Cook off the field last season; he rushed for 1,008 yards as a freshman.

BEST INSTINCTS
Jalen Ramsey, DB, Florida State
If the Seminoles' defense makes a play, chances are Ramsey is around it.

BEST ATHLETE
James Conner, RB, Pittsburgh
The Panthers' willingness to consider using him at defensive end last year suggests plenty of versatility.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED (OFF THE FIELD)
Shaquille Powell, RB, Duke
The senior tailback is a three-time academic All-ACC pick.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Roberto Aguayo, K, Florida State
The junior is 48-for-52 on field goals and has never missed a kick (field goal or PAT) inside 40 yards.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Kendall Fuller, CB, Virginia Tech
Maybe the most talented Fuller brother of them all—and that's saying something since three others played pro ball.

TOP IMPACT FROSH
Derwin James, S, Florida State
The Seminoles rotate a plethora of athletes in the secondary, an opportunity James is likely to seize as an early enrollee.

HARDEST HITTER
Quin Blanding, S, Virginia
The sophomore made an immediate impact on the Cavaliers' defense and is a good bet to earn all-ACC honors this season.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Adam Gotsis, NT, Georgia Tech
An unknown out of Australia when he signed with the Yellow Jackets in 2012, Gotsis was a second-team All-ACC pick last year and has started 26 games in a row.

BEST INTERVIEW
Kelby Brown, LB, Duke
Brown missed last season with the third torn ACL of his college career, but was granted a sixth year of eligibility. Few have the perspective of Duke's recent rise that Brown possesses.

BEST COACH AS STRATEGIST
David Cutcliffe, Duke
The Blue Devils are more heavily invested in football than ever, but their coaching helps make up the gap with schools that enjoy greater resources.

BEST COACH AS RECRUITER
Jimbo Fisher, Florida State
The best path to three consecutive conference titles is to amass the most talent. Fisher's done precisely that.

HOTTEST SEAT
Mike London, Virginia
Now 23-38 over five seasons in Charlottesville (and 11-25 over the last three), it's probably bowl-or-bust for London.

BEST VENUE
Memorial Stadium, Clemson
Death Valley edges out Florida State's Doak Campbell Stadium and Virginia Tech's Lane Stadium as the league's top setting.

FLORIDA STATE
SEMINOLES

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 9

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 1

Jalen Ramsey

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Texas State	
S.12	South Florida	
S.18	@ BOSTON COLLEGE	20-17
O.3	@ WAKE FOREST	43-3
O.10	Miami (FL)	30-26
O.17	Louisville	42-31
O.24	@ GEORGIA TECH	37-35
O.31	Syracuse	38-20
N.7	@ CLEMSON	23-17
N.14	N.C. State	56-41
N.21	Chattanooga	
N.28	@ FLORIDA	24-19

COACH
Jimbo Fisher
Sixth year (58-11)
Career record: 58-11

Offensive coordinators:
Lawrence Dawsey (second year)
Randy Sanders (second year)
Defensive coordinator:
Charles Kelly (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 13-1
(Lost to Oregon in the Rose Bowl, 59-20)
Stadium: Doak Campbell Stadium (82,300)
Tickets: 888-378-6653
Site: Tallahassee, Fla.
Website: seminoles.com
Twitter: @FSU_Football

Jameis Winston's run as college football's most recognizable–and arguably polarizing–figure is over after his departure to the NFL after his redshirt sophomore year.

That means an end to jokes about crab legs, suspensions stemming from crude remarks on campus and, far more seriously, a police investigation into sexual-assault accusations.

It also means the possibility Florida State might not crank out a dozen or more victories this season.

For all of Winston's foibles, the man was the centerpiece of Seminoles teams that went 27-1 over the last two years. He won a Heisman Trophy in 2013 and, while not nearly as sharp last fall, still found ways to help Florida State pull out a series of narrow victories and earn a place in the four-team playoff.

It's funny to think that just two years ago, coach Jimbo Fisher tried to draw out as much suspense as possible before anointing Winston the starter. He wouldn't go so far as to declare Sean Maguire as Winston's successor in the spring, but the redshirt junior (who stepped in for the suspended Winston against Clemson last year) will certainly have a solid chance to earn the job.

It will surely come with scrutiny, since Florida State fans are once again accustomed to not losing (just three times in the last three seasons) and the Seminoles have rattled off three consecutive ACC titles to reclaim supremacy in the league. Any slippage, however understandable it might be, will surely cause some grousing.

In truth, Florida State has more than just Winston to replace. Sophomore Roderick Johnson, who took over primary duties at left tackle for the final five games last season, is

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Jalen Ramsey, DB

Ramsey is the star of the Seminoles' defense. Literally. His position as a hybrid safety/cornerback/linebacker is known simply as "Star." His brilliance was on full display last November against in-state rival Miami. Ramsey opened the game by stripping the ball from a Hurricanes receiver, closed the game with an interception on FSU's 16-yard line to secure the come-from-behind win, then stuffed between those big plays four pass breakups and a blocked extra point.

RAMSEY: PHELAN M. EBENHACK / AP

the only starter back on the offensive line. Graduation took away four mainstays who combined for 164 career starts, and rebuilding the line is probably Fisher's greatest task.

Whoever wins the quarterback job (and while Maguire is the likely opening week favorite, redshirt sophomore John Franklin III and redshirt freshman J.J. Cosentino are contenders as well) will have to do without high-profile targets Rashad Greene and Nick O'Leary. Look for sophomores Travis Rudolph and Ermon Lane to emerge as the latest generation of field-stretching threats in Tallahassee.

One luxury the Seminoles enjoy is an established running back. Dalvin Cook averaged 5.9 yards per carry as a freshman and was named the MVP of the ACC title game, and he could wind up with more work than Fisher typically gives a tailback this fall.

With so much attrition on offense, there is an onus on the Seminoles' defense to regain the formidable form that helped secure a national title two years ago. Last season, Florida State struggled to offset its considerable losses all over the defense, but there are enough pieces in place for that unit to rebound in 2015.

Cornerback Jalen Ramsey and safety Nate Andrews are back to anchor the secondary, while Terrance Smith and Reggie Northrup are All-ACC linebackers. Northrup's recovery from ACL surgery was going very well at press time. The exits of Mario Edwards and Eddie Goldman create issues up front, but a healthy Nile Lawrence-Stample (who started only twice last year because of injuries) will solidify the tackle spot.

Former Groza Award winner Roberto Aguayo is back as the nation's most reliable kicker, while three-year starter Cason Beatty will again do the punting.

BOTTOM LINE

Winning as much as Florida State has of late starts with player evaluation, and Fisher has done a magnificent job of not only landing obviously talented players but also finding some unheralded gems. For all that success, it still isn't easy to completely reload on the fly.

Talent isn't an issue for the Seminoles, but after snaring seven victories by six points or less last season, there's bound to be some regression in the wake of such a talent exodus. Florida State should still be one of the best teams in the country, though.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Jimbo Fisher has built himself into a quarterback guru in his coaching career and he brings in two outstanding arms to work with in the 2015 class with Deondre Francois and De'Andre Johnson. Jones also brought in the nation's top safety in Derwin James, the best speed rusher in the country in Josh Sweat, a five-star cornerback with 6-2 length in Tarvarus McFadden and a 6-3 wide receiver in George Campbell that is a major mismatch problem for defenders. Florida State also brings in a 6-2, 230-pound RB in Jacques Patrick who will complement Dalvin Cook nicely.

TOP SIGNEES

247 SPORTS RATING

1. Derwin James, S ★★★★★
2. Josh Sweat, DE ★★★★★
3. Tarvarus McFadden, CB ★★★★★

MASCOT: CHRIS O'MEARA / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Sean Maguire	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	4	107.7	25-49-2	51.0	339	1	84.8

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Dalvin Cook	13	170	1008	5.9	8	77.5

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Jesus Wilson	13	42	527	12.5	4	40.5

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Reggie Northrup	14	61	61	122

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Jalen Ramsey	14	3.0	32

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Nate Andrews	3	9	3.0	1

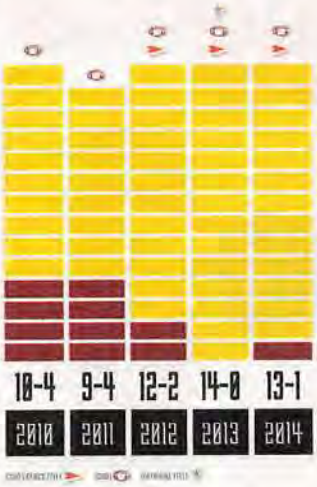
BEHIND THE SADDLE
Chief Osceola rides **Renegade**, an Appaloosa horse, down the field before planting a flaming spear at midfield prior to every home game, providing fans with one of college football's best pregame traditions.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	FSU	OPP
SCORING	472	358
Points Per Game	33.7	25.6
FIRST DOWNS	322	295
Rushing	111	146
Passing	187	131
Penalty	24	18
RUSHING YARDAGE	1933	2382
Yards gained rushing	2312	2730
Yards lost rushing	379	348
Rushing Attempts	451	573
Average Per Rush	4.3	4.2
Average Per Game	138.1	170.1
TDs Rushing	27	21
PASSING YARDAGE	4246	3175
Comp-Att-Int	330-516-20	248-435-14
Average Per Pass	8.2	7.3
Average Per Catch	12.9	12.8
Average Per Game	303.3	226.8
TDs Passing	26	22
TOTAL OFFENSE	6179	5557
Total Plays	967	1008
Average Per Play	6.4	5.5
Average Per Game	441.4	396.9
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	49-971	45-846
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	17-179	13-92
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	14-156	20-132
KICK RETURN AVG.	19.8	18.8
PUNT RETURN AVG.	10.5	7.1
INT RETURN AVG.	11.1	6.6
FUMBLES-LOST	23-12	23-12
PENALTIES-YARDS	87-668	77-685
Average Per Game	47.7	48.9
PUNTS-YARDS	48-1966	64-2712
Average Per Punt	41.0	42.4
Net punt average	38.2	37.7
TIME OF POSS./GAME	28:57	31:03
3RD-DOWN CONV.	80/175	93/212
3rd-Down Pct.	46%	44%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	0/6	7/23
4th-Down Pct.	0%	30%
SACKS BY-YARDS	17-136	23-187
MISC YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	56	44
FG-ATTEMPTS	27-30	18-25
ATTENDANCE	575478	232822
Games/Avg Per Game	7/82211	4/58206
Neutral Site Games		3/72550

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Florida State	82	158	119	107	6	472
Opponent	94	98	89	77	0	358

5-YEAR RECORD 58-11



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Sean Maguire (6-3, 224, Jr.)
	J.J. Cosentino (6-4, 237, Fr.)
FB	Freddie Stevenson (6-1, 244, Jr.)
	Johnathan Vickers (6-1, 215, So.)
TB	Dalvin Cook (6-0, 203, So.)
	Mario Pender (5-10, 204, Jr.)
LT	Roderick Johnson (6-7, 312, So.)
	Brock Ruble (6-8, 313, Fr.)
LG	Kareem Are (6-6, 330, Jr.)
	Wilson Bell (6-4, 318, So.)
C	Alec Eberle (6-5, 294, Fr.)
	Ryan Hoefeld (6-3, 293, So.)
RG	Derrick Kelly (6-5, 310, Fr.)
	Wilson Bell (6-4, 318, So.)
RT	Chad Mavety (6-5, 327, Jr.)
	Brock Ruble (6-8, 313, Fr.)
TE	Ryan Izzo (6-6, 243, Fr.)
	Mavin Saunders (6-6, 258, Fr.)
WR	Travis Rudolph (6-2, 187, So.)
	Ja'Vonn Harrison (6-2, 199, So.)
WR	Ermon Lane (6-3, 205, So.)
	George Campbell (6-3, 197, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	DeMarcus Walker (6-3, 277, Jr.)
	Rick Leonard (6-7, 273, So.)
DT	Derrick Mitchell Jr. (6-4, 307, Sr.)
	Demarcus Christmas (6-3, 302, Fr.)
DT	Nile Lawrence-Stample (6-1, 323, Sr.)
	Derrick Nnadi (6-2, 304, So.)
DE	Jacob Pugh (6-4, 247, So.)
	Chris Casher (6-4, 249, Jr.)
LB	Terrance Smith (6-4, 231, Sr.)
	Tyrell Lyons (6-0, 219, So.)
LB	Reggie Northrup (6-1, 226, Sr.)
	Matthew Thomas (6-3, 224, So.)
NB	Trey Marshall (6-0, 203, So.)
	Jalen Ramsey (6-1, 201, Jr.)
CB	Jalen Ramsey (6-1, 201, Jr.)
	Tarvarus McFadden (6-2, 195, Fr.)
CB	Marquez White (6-0, 179, Jr.)
	Ryan Green (5-10, 198, Jr.)
S	Derwin James (6-2, 212, Fr.)
	Nate Andrews (5-11, 204, Jr.)
S	Tyler Hunter (5-11, 204, Sr.)
	Derwin James (6-2, 212, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Roberto Aguayo (6-1, 204, Jr.)
P	Cason Beatty (6-3, 215, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

CLEMSON
TIGERS

SPORTING NEWS
2015 NATIONAL RANK
11

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH
2

Shaq Lawson

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Wofford	
S.12	Appalachian State	
S.17	@LOUISVILLE	23-17
O.3	Notre Dame	
O.10	Georgia Tech	6-28
O.17	Boston College	17-13
O.24	@MIAMI (FL)	
O.31	@N.C. STATE	41-0
N.7	Florida State	17-23
N.14	@SYRACUSE	16-6
N.21	Wake Forest	34-20
N.28	@SOUTH CAROLINA	35-17

COACH
Dabo Swinney
Eighth year (61-26)
Career record: 61-26

Offensive coordinators:
Tony Elliott (first year)
Jeff Scott (first year)
Defensive coordinator:
Brent Venables (fourth year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat Oklahoma in the Russell Athletic Bowl, 40-6)
Stadium: Memorial Stadium (81,500)
Tickets: 1-800-CLEMSON
Site: Clemson, S.C.
Website: clemsontigers.com
Twitter: @ClemsonFB

Chad Morris, the architect of Clemson's recent offensive juggernaut, is gone. Crucial pieces from the Tigers' dominant defense are off to the NFL. And the quarterback set to help keep Dabo Swinney's team in the mix for another 10-win season underwent surgery to fix a torn ACL in December.

This doesn't seem like the formula for a conference title contender. But given its growth over the last four years, Clemson is plenty capable of shaking off obstacles and continuing to roll.

Last season was, in many ways, a true test of how far the Tigers had come. Once derided for their inconsistency, they shrugged off massive losses on offense and went 10-3. If that's what Clemson now does when it is recalibrating, the Tigers' potential in a more settled situation is considerable.

Does that arrive this year? That's tough to say. Swinney tabbed Tony Elliott and Jeff Scott to run the offense after Morris left at the end of the regular season to take over at SMU. The early returns–dropping 40 points on Oklahoma in the Russell Athletic Bowl–were favorable.

So much of what Clemson hopes to accomplish, though, is tied to sophomore quarterback Deshaun Watson. When Watson was healthy and finally handed the offense (he didn't make his first start until the fourth game), the Tigers were imposing. When he wasn't, Clemson was forced to rely on its stingy defense to handle matters (and it usually did).

Watson missed the spring after ACL surgery, but Clemson is optimistic he will be ready for preseason practice. If healthy, he's a reasonable pick to be the best quarterback in the conference.

He'll also have some help. Tailback Wayne Gallman earned a much larger role in the second half of his debut season, rumbling for 571 yards over the last six games. Fellow

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Shaq Lawson, DE

As a freshman Lawson earned comparisons to 2010 Clemson All-American Da'Quan Bowers. In a rotation at defensive end with former All-American Vic Beasley and Corey Crawford last year as a sophomore, Lawson accounted for 11 tackles for loss and 3.5 sacks despite Beasley leading the ACC in both categories. With the standard already set for him, the 6-3, 275-pound Central, S.C., product is the edge-rushing heir apparent in Death Valley.

LAWSON: JOHN RADUX / AP

sophomore Artavis Scott emerged as an excellent complement to deep threat Mike Williams, and the duo returns intact at wide receiver this season.

Center Ryan Norton enters his third year as a starter, while senior Isaiah Battle provides stability at left tackle. Sorting out the other three positions on the line will be vital to Clemson's success.

There are fewer certainties on a defense that ranked first nationally in total yards allowed, third in points allowed and fifth in rushing yards allowed. It capped three years of consistent growth under coordinator Brent Venables, and there's bound to be some regression with only three starters back and the departure of defensive linemen Vic Beasley and Grady Jarrett and linebacker Stephone Anthony.

However, Clemson is not without some experience to plug in. Defensive end Shaq Lawson had 11 tackles for loss a season ago, while tackle D.J. Reader has logged more than 800 snaps over the last three seasons. Ben Boulware figures to slide into Anthony's slot; he had an interception return for a touchdown in the bowl game while Anthony was suspended for targeting.

In the secondary, sophomore cornerback Mackensie Alexander and junior safety Jayron Kearse both have a year of starting experience to their credit.

Kicker Ammon Lakip returns after making 21 of 28 field goals last season, but the Tigers must replace punter Bradley Pinion, who turned pro after his junior season.

BOTTOM LINE

Clemson's 2014 season depended heavily on how well the Tigers handled an arduous opening stretch that included trips to Georgia and Florida State. They lost both of those games, but won nine of their last 10 (including comfortable defeats of South Carolina and Oklahoma). Suffice it to say, they dealt with the tough start well.

It seems just as clear what the Tigers must deal with this fall. If Watson is (and can remain) healthy, can the offense be effective from the start of the season as the defense tries to quickly mature? With Louisville, Notre Dame and Georgia Tech staring at Clemson in an early three-game stretch, that will be the difference between another strong season and a potentially magical one in Death Valley.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Clemson is quietly one of the top programs in the country from a recruiting standpoint and Dabo Swinney did it again in 2015. This year he brought in two elite skill players from the sunshine state in the nation's No. 2 wide receiver in Deon Cain and the No. 7 athlete in Ray Ray McCloud III. Clemson also had one of the nation's top defensive line classes led by Christian Wilkins out of Connecticut. On the other side of the line of scrimmage, Clemson landed the nation's No. 2 offensive tackle in Mitch Hyatt, an early enrollee who could compete for a starting job in the fall.

TOP SIGNEES 247 COMPOSITE

1. **Deon Cain,** WR ★★★★★
2. **Mitch Hyatt,** OT ★★★★★
3. **Christian Wilkins,** DT ★★★★★

MASCOTS: RICHARD SHIRO/AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Deshaun Watson	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	8	188.6	93-137-2	67.9	1466	14	183.2

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Wayne Gallman	13	161	769	4.8	4	59.2

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Mike Williams	13	57	1030	18.1	6	79.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jayron Kearse	13	45	15	60

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Shaq Lawson	13	3.5	32

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Jadar Johnson	2	84	42.0	1
Korrin Wiggins	2	44	22.0	0
Jayron Kearse	2	21	10.5	0

BEHIND THE MASK

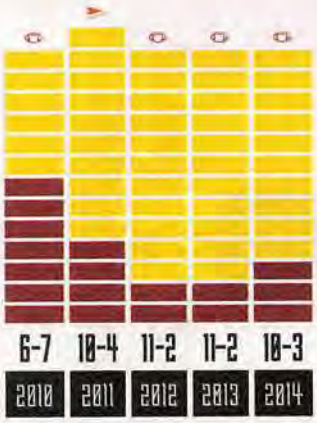
The Tiger was first introduced in 1954 along with the "Country Gentleman," a student dressed in purple tails and a top hat carrying a cane. The Country Gentleman was discontinued in 1972, and the **Tiger Cub** debuted in 1993.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	CLEMSON	OPP
SCORING	401	217
Points Per Game	30.8	16.7
FIRST DOWNS	267	185
Rushing	105	86
Passing	145	81
Penalty	17	18
RUSHING YARDAGE	1904	1344
Yards gained rushing	2279	1923
Yards lost rushing	375	579
Rushing Attempts	539	453
Average Per Rush	3.5	3.0
Average Per Game	146.5	103.4
TDs Rushing	20	11
PASSING YARDAGE	3404	2046
Comp-Att-Int	292-451-12	194-388-12
Average Per Pass	7.5	5.3
Average Per Catch	11.7	10.5
Average Per Game	261.8	157.4
TDs Passing	23	12
TOTAL OFFENSE	5308	3390
Total Plays	990	841
Average Per Play	5.4	4.0
Average Per Game	408.3	260.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	29-544	41-816
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	35-199	27-174
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-213	12-198
KICK RETURN AVG.	18.8	19.9
PUNT RETURN AVG.	5.7	6.4
INT RETURN AVG.	17.8	16.5
FUMBLES-LOST	14-6	24-12
PENALTIES-YARDS	52-450	79-601
Average Per Game	34.6	46.2
PUNTS-YARDS	78-3306	105-4580
Average Per Punt	42.4	43.6
Net punt average	39.6	41.2
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:23	28:37
3RD-DOWN CONV.	93/222	54/197
3rd-Down Pct.	42%	27%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	5/14	5/15
4th-Down Pct.	36%	33%
SACKS BY-YARDS	45-356	27-196
MISC YARDS	0	12
TDS SCORED	48	27
FG-ATTEMPTS	21-28	11-15
ATTENDANCE	561230	295324
Games/Avg Per Game	7/80176	5/59065
Neutral Site Games		1/40071

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Clemson	96	145	86	74	0	401
Opponent	43	47	47	74	6	217

5-YEAR RECORD 48-18



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Deshaun Watson (6-2, 205, So.)
	Nick Schuessler (6-3, 195, Jr.)
RB	Wayne Gallman (6-1, 205, So.)
	Zac Brooks (6-0, 200, Jr.)
LT	Isaiah Battle (6-7, 290, Sr.)
	Mitch Hyatt (6-6, 270, Fr.)
LG	Eric Mac Lain (6-4, 305, Sr.)
	Noah Green (6-5, 275, Fr.)
C	Ryan Norton (6-3, 285, Sr.)
	Justin Falcinelli (6-3, 305, Fr.)
RG	Tyrone Crowder (6-2, 330, So.)
	Zach Giella (6-5, 275, Fr.)
RT	Joe Gore (6-5, 290, Sr.)
	Jake Fruhmorgen (6-5, 285, Fr.)
TE	Jordan Leggett (6-5, 250, Jr.)
	Stanton Seckinger (6-5, 240, Sr.)
WR	Mike Williams (6-4, 210, Jr.)
	Trevion Thompson (6-2, 195, Fr.)
WR	Charone Peake (6-2, 205, Sr.)
	Germone Hopper (5-11, 175, Jr.)
WR	Artavis Scott (5-10, 190, So.)
	Ray Ray McCloud (5-9, 175, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Shaq Lawson (6-3, 275, Jr.)
	Richard Yeargin (6-4, 225, Fr.)
DT	D.J. Reader (6-2, 325, Sr.)
	Scott Pagano (6-3, 295, So.)
DT	Carlos Watkins (6-3, 295, Jr.)
	Christian Wilkins (6-5, 305, Fr.)
DE	Kevin Dodd (6-5, 275, Jr.)
	Ebenezer Ogundeko (6-3, 250, So.)
SLB	Dorian O'Daniel (6-2, 215, So.)
	Korrin Wiggins (5-11, 195, Jr.)
MLB	B.J. Goodson (6-0, 240, Sr.)
	Kendall Joseph (5-11, 225, Fr.)
WLB	Ben Boulware (6-0, 235, Jr.)
	Korie Rogers (6-2, 235, Fr.)
CB	Mackensie Alexander (5-10, 190, So.)
	Ryan Carter (5-9, 180, So.)
CB	Cordrea Tankersley (6-1, 195, Jr.)
	Mark Fields (5-10, 185, Fr.)
S	Jayron Kearse (6-4, 210, Jr.)
	T.J. Green (6-3, 205, Jr.)
S	Jadar Johnson (6-0, 200, Jr.)
	Jefferie Gibson (6-4, 200, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Ammon Lakip (5-11, 200, Sr.)
P	Andy Teasdall (5-11, 185, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

LOUISVILLE
CARDINALS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **3**

Brandon Radcliff

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Auburn (at Atlanta, GA)	
S.12	Houston	
S.17	Clemson	17-23
S.26	Samford	
O.3	@N.C. STATE	30-18
O.17	@FLORIDA STATE	31-42
O.24	Boston College	38-19
O.30	@WAKE FOREST	20-10
N.7	Syracuse	28-6
N.14	Virginia	21-23
N.21	@PITTSBURGH	
N.28	@KENTUCKY	44-40

COACH
Bobby Petrino
Sixth year (50-13)
Career record: 92-34

Offensive coordinator:
Garrick McGee (second year)
Defensive coordinator:
Todd Grantham (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 9-4
(Lost to Georgia in the Belk Bowl, 37-14)
Stadium: Papa John's Cardinal Stadium (55,000)
Tickets: 502-852-5151
Site: Louisville, Ky.
Website: gocards.com
Twitter: @UofLFootball

No greater question faced the Louisville football program this spring than just who would play quarterback in 2015.

It's safe to say there is not a shortage of options for coach Bobby Petrino to choose from.

From sophomores Reggie Bonnafon and Kyle Bolin to Penn State transfer Tyler Ferguson to the on-the-mend Will Gardner, the Cardinals' offense could find itself in the hands of several quarterbacks before the season is through.

Gardner threw for 12 touchdowns and three interceptions in eight games, but missed the end of the season with a left knee injury. Bonnafon, a Louisville native, made five starts as a true freshman while showing dual-threat abilities. Bolin stepped in against Kentucky in the regular-season finale to throw for 381 yards and three touchdowns.

All had their moments, but Louisville never enjoyed especially consistent quarterback play. For the Cardinals to build on last year's 9-4 mark, they'll need steadier production at that position.

Brandon Radcliff (team-high 12 rushing touchdowns) and L.J. Scott are again among the contenders for playing time at running back, while the receiving corps must replace star DaVante Parker. Among the candidates include holdover James Quick, as well as a pair of transfers (Ja'Quay Williams from Texas A&M and Jamari Staples from UAB).

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Brandon Radcliff, RB

Radcliff spent 2013 mainly as a kick returner and began last season as a fourth-string running back. He finished 2014 as the team leader in rushing yards and touchdowns despite starting just five games. The 5-9, 214-pound junior from Miami made the most of his opportunities, gaining 737 yards on just 144 carries and scoring 12 touchdowns. That averages out to a touchdown every 61 yards gained.

For all of its skill-position options, Louisville does have significant questions up front. Center Tobijah Hughley is the only full-time starter who returns, though tackle Aaron Epps earned six starts late in the season. Solidifying the rest of that unit will be a preseason priority for the Cardinals, who will face Auburn and Clemson in the first three weeks of September.

The most likely scenario, however, is that Louisville again relies on its stout defense to

RADCLIFF: STEPHAN SAVOIA/AP

keep it in games, especially early in the season.

Louisville adapted well to its switch to a 3-4 scheme last season, and while its national rankings sagged slightly, the quality of the schedule improved considerably in its new league. The Cardinals were especially strong against the run, yielding only 109.9 yards per game, and bring back three starters, including defensive end Sheldon Rankins (13.5 tackles for loss, 8 sacks).

Inside linebackers James Burgess and Keith Kelsey should be mainstays again, with Louisville searching for a replacement for first team all-ACC pick Lorenzo Mauldin.

Look for Devonte Fields, the Big 12's Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2012 at TCU, to emerge as an impact newcomer. Fields spent last year at a junior college after the Horned Frogs booted him following an arrest for misdemeanor assault. How Fields handles his second chance will influence both how much success the Cardinals' defense enjoys and how much scrutiny the program receives as it delves deeper into Petrino's second stint in charge.

Nearly the entire starting secondary exits, including star safety Gerod Holliman, and Georgia transfer Josh Harvey-Clemons is among the notable options contending for playing time.

Louisville's kicker position safely belongs to senior John Wallace, whose 51 field goals are nine shy of the school's career record. Josh Appleby, a career reserve who had six punts last season, will have the chance to seize a starting role as a senior.

BOTTOM LINE

There was a certain irony that Petrino, who burnished his reputation as an offensive mastermind in an earlier stint at Louisville and again at Arkansas, found himself with a dominant defense paired with an unpredictable offense in his first year back with the Cardinals. Between a plethora of quarterback options and another year in Petrino's system, the offense should be better.

Yet Louisville still looks like a team that will go as far as its defense can take it. The front seven is an imposing group, and the Cardinals should be able to remain a threat in nearly every game they play. They might not make a run at an ACC title, but there's enough in place to replicate last year's nine-win performance.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Louisville continues to recruit Florida well with Bobby Petrino continuing the trend that Charlie Strong started. This year the Cardinals landed one of the top quarterbacks in the country out of Florida in Lamar Jackson and an explosive back named James Allen. Alabama has also become a priority and Darius Smith is a versatile defender out of Florence, Ala., that can be a playmaker at safety or linebacker. The juco ranks were also good to Petrino with former TCU Freshman All-America Devonte Fields and Fresno City College big back Jeremy Smith highlighting the haul.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

- Devonte Fields, DE ★★★★
- Darius Smith, LB ★★★★
- Devante Peete, WR ★★★★

MASCOT: JOHAN BAZEMORE / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Will Gardner	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	8	136.1	127-221-3	57.5	1669	12	208.6

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Brandon Radcliff	13	144	737	5.1	12	56.7

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
James Quick	12	36	566	15.7	3	47.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Keith Kelsey	13	60	27	87

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Sheldon Rankins	13	8.0	47

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
James Burgess	3	8	2.7	0

BEHIND THE MASK

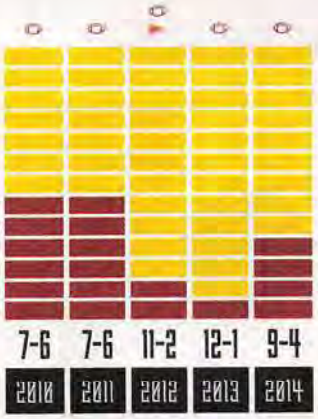
Louisville's athletic teams have been known as the Cardinals since 1913. The **Cardinal Bird** was chosen as the mascot to identify with members of the commonwealth of Kentucky since the cardinal is the official state bird.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	LOUISVILLE	OPP
SCORING	405	283
Points Per Game	31.2	21.8
FIRST DOWNS	265	199
Rushing	116	74
Passing	133	110
Penalty	16	15
RUSHING YARDAGE	1855	1429
Yards gained rushing	2313	1894
Yards lost rushing	458	465
Rushing Attempts	511	433
Average Per Rush	3.6	3.3
Average Per Game	142.7	109.9
TDs Rushing	28	12
PASSING YARDAGE	3276	2595
Comp-Att-Int	237-428-10	221-410-26
Average Per Pass	7.7	6.3
Average Per Catch	13.8	11.7
Average Per Game	252.0	199.6
TDs Passing	21	14
TOTAL OFFENSE	5131	4024
Total Plays	939	843
Average Per Play	5.5	4.8
Average Per Game	394.7	309.5
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	36-758	45-1017
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	37-274	31-301
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	26-310	10-117
KICK RETURN AVG.	21.1	22.6
PUNT RETURN AVG.	7.4	9.7
INT RETURN AVG.	11.9	11.7
FUMBLES-LOST	25-16	11-4
PENALTIES-YARDS	90-641	65-567
Average Per Game	49.3	43.6
PUNTS-YARDS	73-2909	79-3328
Average Per Punt	39.8	42.1
Net punt average	34.4	37.1
TIME OF POSS./GAME	32:32	27:28
3RD-DOWN CONV.	78/198	62/195
3rd-Down Pct.	39%	32%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	11/21	4/16
4th-Down Pct.	52%	25%
SACKS BY-YARDS	40-303	39-304
MISC YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	51	31
FG-ATTEMPTS	15-19	23-26
ATTENDANCE	317829	279071
Games/Avg Per Game	6/52972	6/46512
Neutral Site Games		1/45671

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Louisville	83	140	75	107	0	405
Opponent	56	66	83	78	0	283

5-YEAR RECORD 46-19



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Reggie Bonnafon (6-3, 209, So.)
	Kyle Bolin (6-2, 208, So.)
RB	Brandon Radcliff (5-9, 214, Jr.)
	L.J. Scott (6-0, 226, So.)
LT	Kelby Johnson (6-7, 297, Sr.)
	Lukayus McNeil (6-6, 313, So.)
LG	Pedro Sibiea (6-3, 300, Jr.)
	Khalil Hunter (6-4, 300, Jr.)
C	Tobijah Hughley (6-3, 289, Jr.)
	T.C.Klusman (6-3, 275, Jr.)
RG	Skylar Lacy (6-6, 306, So.)
	Gabe Ahner (6-3, 289, Jr.)
RT	Aaron Epps (6-7, 288, Sr.)
	Danny Burns (6-6, 303, So.)
TE	Keith Towbridge (6-5, 261, Jr.)
	Micky Crum (6-4, 257, So.)
WR	Ja'Quay Williams (6-3, 214, Jr.)
	Gio Pascascio (6-3, 185, Jr.)
WR	James Quick (6-1, 191, Jr.)
	Charles Standberry (6-3, 226, So.)
WR	Jamari Staples (6-4, 195, Jr.)
	Javonte Bagley (6-3, 192, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Sheldon Rankins (6-2, 303, Sr.)
	Drew Bailey (6-5, 285, Jr.)
NT	DeAngelo Brown (6-1, 308, Jr.)
	Johnny Richardson (6-3, 322, So.)
DE	Pio Vatuvei (6-2, 296, Sr.)
	Kyle Shortridge (6-2, 305, So.)
OLB	Keith Brown (6-1, 237, Jr.)
	Nick Dawson-Brents (6-3, 265, Jr.)
ILB	Keith Kelsey (6-1, 236, Jr.)
	Stacy Thomas (6-1, 225, So.)
ILB	James Burgess (6-0, 229, Sr.)
	Trevon Young (6-4, 229, Sr.)
OLB	Henry Famurewa (6-2, 245, So.)
	Finesse Middleton (6-0, 242, So.)
CB	Shaq Wiggins (5-10, 171, Jr.)
	Trumaine Washington (5-10, 183, So.)
CB	Cornelius Sturghill (5-11, 186, So.)
	Jaire Alexander (5-11, 170, Fr.)
FS	Josh Harvey-Clemons (6-5, 230, Sr.)
	Jarrod Barnes (5-11, 193, Jr.)
SS	Chucky Williams (6-2, 204, So.)
	Zykiesis Cannon (6-0, 195, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	John Wallace (6-0, 190, Sr.)
P	Josh Appleby (6-3, 223, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

N.C. STATE
WOLFPACK

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **4**

Atlantic Coast - Atlantic

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Troy	
S.12	Eastern Kentucky	
S.19	@ OLD DOMINION	46-34
S.26	@ SOUTH ALABAMA	
O.3	Louisville	18-30
O.9	@ VIRGINIA TECH	
O.24	@ WAKE FOREST	42-13
O.31	Clemson	0-41
N.7	@ BOSTON COLLEGE	14-30
N.14	@ FLORIDA STATE	41-56
N.21	Syracuse	24-17
N.28	North Carolina	35-7

COACH
Dave Doeren
Third year (11-14)
Career record: 34-18
Offensive coordinator: Matt Canada (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Dave Huxtable (third year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat UCF in the St. Petersburg Bowl, 34-27)
Stadium: Carter-Finley Stadium (57,583)
Tickets: 919-865-1510
Site: Raleigh, N.C.
Website: gopack.com
Twitter: @PackFootball

Matt Dayes

Things were starting to become mildly uncomfortable for N.C. State under coach Dave Doeren, whose tenure began with 12 consecutive ACC losses. But last November brought some relief: Three wins in four games to close out the regular season, followed by a victory over UCF in a bowl game.

That closing stretch, which included an emphatic rout of rival North Carolina, provided far greater hope to Wolfpack fans that things were heading in the right direction than the season-opening four-game winning streak against a soft nonconference slate ever could. Now comes the chore of continuing to build and close the gap on Clemson, Florida State and Louisville in the Atlantic Division.

It won't be easy, but the presence of quarterback Jacoby Brissett and running backs Shadrach Thornton and Matt Dayes certainly provides a boost. Brissett wasn't perfect, but the Florida transfer was still a massive upgrade over the collection of quarterbacks Doeren used in his first season and is one of the ACC's most established players at his position.

Thornton is the No. 4 returning rusher in the conference after mustering 907 yards and nine touchdowns last year. Dayes, meanwhile, is a versatile back who can be effective in the passing game.

The skill positions featured a fairly anonymous cast not long ago in Raleigh, but the biggest concerns entering the year on both sides of the ball are up front. The Wolfpack graduated both of its starting tackles, and three of its four starters on the defensive front are gone as well. How well their replacements fare will help determine how far N.C. State can go.

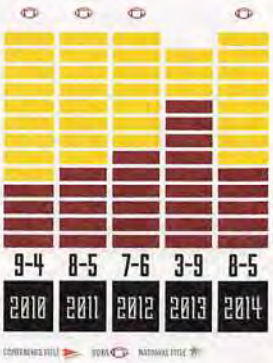
Special teams also have two big holes after the departures of first-team All-ACC punter Wil Baumann and kicker Niklas Sade.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Matt Dayes, RB

Dayes was an all-purpose dynamo for the Wolfpack in 2014 with 1,278 yards and 13 touchdowns as a rusher, receiver and kick returner. Not only did he average 5.5 yards per carry and score eight touchdowns, but he's also the team's top returning receiver after catching 32 passes for 321 yards and five TDs last season. He'll double again as a rushing option in the backfield and a safe and sure outlet in the passing game.

BOTTOM LINE
The nonconference schedule is again favorable, so the Wolfpack should go bowling again. There probably isn't enough in place to seriously contend for an Atlantic title, but N.C. State might have an upset in it this year. Either way, look for progress from the Wolfpack, even if there isn't a big bump in the win column.

5-YEAR RECORD 35-29



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Jacoby Brissett (6-4, 235, Sr.)
RB	Shadrach Thornton (6-1, 205, Sr.)
FB	Jaylen Samuels (5-11, 236, So.)
LT	Tyler Jones (6-3, 290, Fr.)
LG	Joe Thuney (6-5, 288, Gr.)
C	Quinton Schooley (6-4, 308, Sr.)
RG	Tony Adams (6-2, 318, So.)
RT	Alex Barr (6-8, 326, Sr.)
TE	David J. Grinnage (6-5, 274, Jr.)
WR	Johnathan Alston (6-0, 203, Jr.)
WR	Jumichael Ramos (6-2, 200, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Bradley Chubb (6-4, 257, So.)
DT	Kentavius Street (6-2, 278, So.)
DT	B.J. Hill (6-4, 294, So.)
DE	Mike Rose (6-3, 277, Sr.)
LB	Airius Moore (6-0, 232, So.)
LB	Jerod Fernandez (6-0, 231, So.)
NB	Dravious Wright (5-10, 205, Jr.)
CB	Jack Tocho (6-0, 198, Jr.)
CB	Juston Burris (6-1, 207, Gr.)
FS	Hakim Jones (6-2, 200, Sr.)
SS	Josh Jones (6-2, 215, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Kyle Bambard (5-8, 188, Fr.)
P	A.J. Cole III (6-4, 230, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

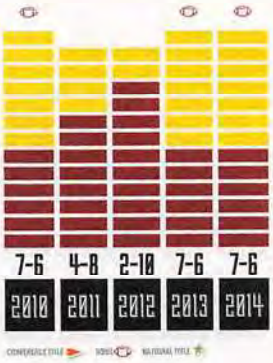
TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING
1. **Johnny Frasier,** RB ★★★★
2. **Darian Roseboro,** DE ★★★★
3. **Nyheim Hines,** RB ★★★★

N.C. State made a big push with its 2015 class by landing what some consider to be the best running back class in the country. Johnny Frasier, Reggie Gallaspy and Nyheim Hines are as good as any three backs in a single class in the country and each bring a slightly different element to the table. The Wolfpack recruited well in their back yard too, led by four-star DE Darian Roseboro and four-star OT Emmanuel McGirt.

DAYES: GERRY BROOME / AP

BOSTON COLLEGE EAGLES

5-YEAR RECORD 27-36



Jon Hilliman

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

5

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

- **QB** Darius Wade (6-0, 201, So.)
- **RB** Jon Hilliman (6-0, 215, So.)
- **FB** Bobby Wolford (6-2, 248, Sr.)
- **LT** Dave Bowen (6-7, 291, Sr.)
- **LG** Jon Baker (6-3, 281, So.)
- **C** Frank Taylor (6-3, 297, Sr.)
- **RG** Harris Williams (6-3, 299, Gr.)
- **RT** James Hendren (6-7, 287, So.)
- **TE** Michael Giacone (6-5, 262, Sr.)
- **WR** Charlie Callinan (6-4, 220, So.)
- **WR** Dan Crimmins (6-5, 237, Sr.)

DEFENSE

- **DE** Kevin Kavalec (6-2, 256, Jr.)
- **DT** Truman Gutapfel (6-3, 289, Jr.)
- **NT** Connor Wujciak (6-3, 304, Sr.)
- **DE** Malachi Moore (6-7, 274, Sr.)
- **LB** Matt Milano (6-1, 220, Jr.)
- **LB** Steven Daniels (6-0, 257, Sr.)
- **LB** Mike Strizak (6-2, 229, Sr.)
- **CB** Isaac Yiadom (6-1, 170, So.)
- **CB** John Johnson (6-0, 194, Jr.)
- **S** Justin Simmons (6-3, 198, Sr.)
- **S** Kamrin Moore (5-11, 186, So.)

SPECIALISTS

- **K** Mike Knoll (6-0, 214, So.)
- **P** Alex Howell (6-5, 206, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Anthony Palazzolo,** OT ★★★
2. **Elijah Robinson,** QB ★★★
3. **Aaron Monteiro,** OT ★★★

A top-60 class nationally for Boston College featured some big bodies on the line of scrimmage. Anthony Palazzolo and Aaron Monteiro, both at 6-6 and more than 300 pounds, are the guys B.C. hopes will be the bookends for years to come, with Wyatt Knopfke as the anchor in the middle. We think defensive lineman Zach Allen out of Connecticut may be the most talented pickup of the class though.

Underestimate Steve Addazio and Boston College at your own risk.

Twice, Addazio's Eagles have been pegged to finish near or at the bottom of the ACC's Atlantic Division. And twice Boston College has bagged seven regular-season victories and a bowl bid to further re-establish itself as a regular postseason team, if not a conference title contender.

Addazio's formula remains both basic and profound. Control the line of scrimmage with a capable running game and an excellent defensive front, and minimize penalties and turnovers to force opponents to outplay the Eagles.

The restocking of Boston College's roster to optimize Addazio's preferred way of playing isn't complete, but it's hard not to say the Eagles are ahead of even the most optimistic timetables. Nonetheless, there are two areas that were not problem spots the last two years that possess some uncertainty entering 2015.

After using a four-year starter (Chase Rettig) and a graduate transfer (Tyler Murphy) at quarterback the last two seasons, the Eagles are inexperienced at the position this year. Sophomore Darius Wade appeared in three games last fall and attempted just eight passes, but his strong arm could help him emerge as a long-term solution under center.

The greater concern is the offensive line, which was littered with fifth-year players in back-to-back seasons. No such luxury exists this year, and the Eagles' ability to reload up front will dictate just how successful they can be. All five starters from 2014 must be replaced.

Defensive coordinator Don Brown's aggressive system fostered the nation's No. 2 rushing defense, and linebacker Steven Daniels and nose tackle Connor Wujciak anchor a front seven that lost only a pair of starters. There are more questions in the secondary, where Justin Simmons is the lone returning starter.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Jon Hilliman, RB

As a freshman in 2014, Hilliman played in all 13 games and started seven, developing a nose for the end zone while finishing with 13 touchdowns and 860 rushing yards. Former QB Tyler Murphy, who had 11 rushing touchdowns himself, has graduated, so it's on the 6-0, 215-pound Hilliman to carry the offensive load.

BOTTOM LINE

Boston College has some weak spots, but it does have the benefit of a well-established identity. While the Eagles aren't particularly flashy, they play to their strengths and minimize their miscues. Even with quarterback and especially the offensive line to sort out, it would come as little surprise if the results of Addazio's third season are much like his first two.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Maine	40-10
S.12	Howard	
S.18	Florida State	17-20
S.26	Northern Illinois	
O.3	@DUKE	
O.10	Wake Forest	23-17
O.17	@CLEMSON	13-17
O.24	@LOUISVILLE	19-38
O.31	Virginia Tech	33-31
N.7	N.C. State	30-14
N.21	Notre Dame (in Boston, Mass.)	
N.28	@SYRACUSE	28-7

COACH

Steve Addazio
Third year (14-12)
Career record: 27-23

Offensive coordinator: Todd Fitch (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Don Brown (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Penn State in the Pinstripe Bowl, 31-30)
Stadium: Alumni Stadium (44,500)
Tickets: 617-552-GoBC
Site: Chestnut Hill, Mass.
Website: bceagles.com
Twitter: @BCFootballNews

HILLIMAN: BILL KOSTROUN / AP

SYRACUSE

ORANGE

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

Atlantic Coast - Atlantic

Marqez Hodge

The mandate for Syracuse is obvious enough after sliding to 3-9 in its second year both in the ACC and under coach Scott Shafer: Improve on offense or endure another miserable season.

The Orange dealt with its share of injuries last season, notably to quarterback Terrel Hunt, but its feeble play on that side of the ball wasn't entirely dependent upon who was available to play. It ultimately cost George McDonald his offensive coordinator duties midseason, and Tim Lester was elevated to replace him.

Lester kept the full-time gig, and it will be his task to help Syracuse re-establish something of an identity after mustering nine offensive touchdowns in the final nine games. Hunt, a dual-threat option who threw for just one touchdown in five starts before suffering a broken fibula, will be back, and that alone should add some life to the Orange's rushing game.

Invigorating the passing attack, however, is trickier. Sophomore wideout Steve Ishmael showed some potential in the second half of last season, and a healthy Brisly Estime would give Hunt an elusive possession receiver. Those pieces nonetheless need to improve if Syracuse, which was next-to-last nationally in pass efficiency last year, is to field a multidimensional offense.

Shafer's first two teams were decent defensively, particularly against the run. But eight starters have departed and it has turned a relative strength into a considerable question entering the fall.

Linebacker Marqez Hodge and defensive end Ron Thompson are the returning anchors in the front seven, while cornerback Julian Whigham is the lone starter back in a secondary that will now be without two-year starter Durell Eskridge (early entry to the NFL Draft).

Senior punter Riley Dixon, an honorable mention All-ACC pick in 2014, is the Orange's lone returning all-conference selection.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Marqez Hodge, LB

Last year Hodge was the lone sophomore on a defensive unit full of upperclassmen, but he was given the leadership role at middle linebacker. He put together a respectable line with 38 tackles, 5.5 tackles for loss, three sacks and a fumble recovery in nine games before a season-ending injury. He's back as the leader of a defense that returns just four regulars, so his mettle will be tested.

BOTTOM LINE

Syracuse simply didn't have the offensive talent to threaten the top teams in the ACC last season, and that was obvious even before injuries set in. Even if it is at full health, the Orange must deal with Clemson, Florida State, LSU and Louisville. That offers Syracuse little margin for error if it hopes to return to a bowl game.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	Rhode Island	
S.12	Wake Forest	30-7
S.19	Central Michigan	40-3
S.26	LSU	
O.10	@ SOUTH FLORIDA	
O.17	@ VIRGINIA	
O.24	Pittsburgh	7-30
O.31	@ FLORIDA STATE	20-38
N.7	@ LOUISVILLE	6-28
N.14	Clemson	6-16
N.21	@ N.C. STATE	17-24
N.28	Boston College	7-28

COACH

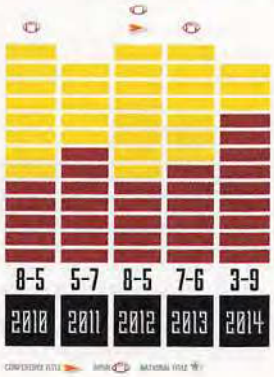
Scott Shafer
Third year (10-15)
Career record: 10-15

Offensive coordinator: Tim Lester (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Chuck Bullough (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: Carrier Dome (49,262)
Tickets: 1-888-DOMETIX
Site: Syracuse, N.Y.
Website: cuse.com
Twitter: @CuseFootball

5-YEAR RECORD 31-32



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Terrel Hunt (6-3, 234, Gr.)
RB	Devante McFarlane (6-0, 198, Sr.)
HB	Ashton Broyld (6-3, 216, Sr.)
LT	Ivan Foy (6-5, 292, Sr.)
LG	Nick Robinson (6-6, 279, Sr.)
C	Rob Trudo (6-4, 300, Sr.)
RG	Aaron Roberts (6-4, 285, So.)
RT	Omari Palmer (6-3, 303, Sr.)
TE	Josh Parris (6-4, 245, Sr.)
WR	Steve Ishmael (6-2, 184, So.)
WR	Alvin Cornelius (6-1, 193, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Ron Thompson (6-3, 257, Sr.)
DT	Kayton Samuels (6-0, 319, So.)
DT	John Raymon (6-5, 325, Sr.)
DE	Donnie Simmons (6-2, 248, Sr.)
LB	Parris Bennett (6-0, 223, So.)
LB	Zaire Franklin (6-0, 238, So.)
LB	Marqez Hodge (5-11, 218, Jr.)
CB	Julian Whigham (6-1, 185, Sr.)
CB	Wayne Morgan (5-11, 198, Sr.)
S	Chauncey Scissum (6-2, 206, Jr.)
S	Rodney Williams (5-10, 187, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Cole Murphy (6-3, 193, So.)
P	Riley Dixon (6-5, 221, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1. **Dontae Strickland,** ATH ★★★
2. **Marquis Blair,** S ★★★
3. **Amir Ealey,** TE ★★★

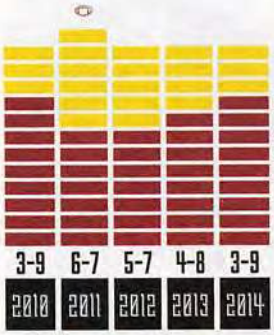
Syracuse found maybe its most intriguing prospect after national signing day in QB/ATH Kenterius Womack out of rural Alabama who had no offers before the Orange found him. He joins another talented quarterback in Eric Dungey out of Oregon. Syracuse found another intriguing Alabama native in Steven Clark, who chose Syracuse over Florida and Vanderbilt. But don't be surprised if it's in-state back Tyrone Perkins that ends up being the best of this group.

HODGE: NICK LISI/AP

WAKE FOREST

DEMON DEACONS

5-YEAR RECORD 21-40



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

- **QB** John Wolford (6-1, 205, So.)
- **RB** Isaiah Robinson (5-10, 215, So.)
- **LT** Justin Herron (6-5, 290, Fr.)
- **LG** Dylan Intemann (6-3, 305, Sr.)
- **C** Ryan Anderson (6-6, 290, Fr.)
- **RG** Josh Harris (6-4, 310, Jr.)
- **RT** Phil Haynes (6-4, 280, Fr.)
- **TE** Cam Serigne (6-3, 245, So.)
- **WR** Jared Crump (6-3, 205, Jr.)
- **WR** Tabari Hines (5-10, 165, Fr.)
- **WR** Cortez Lewis (6-1, 200, Fr.)

DEFENSE

- **DE** Wendell Dunn (6-3, 250, So.)
- **NT** Tylor Harris (6-4, 305, Sr.)
- **DT** Josh Banks (6-4, 275, Jr.)
- **DE** Duke Ejiofor (6-4, 275, So.)
- **LB** Brandon Chubb (6-1, 245, Sr.)
- **LB** Marquel Lee (6-3, 235, Jr.)
- **CB** Brad Watson (6-0, 190, Jr.)
- **CB** Thomas Dillon (5-10, 180, So.)
- **ROV** Hunter Williams (6-0, 220, Sr.)
- **FS** Ryan Janvion (5-11, 190, Jr.)
- **SS** Thomas Brown (6-3, 220, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

- **K** Mike Weaver (6-1, 180, So.)
- **P** Alexander Kinal (6-4, 205, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES (247 Star Rating)

1. **Kyle Kearns,** QB ★★★
2. **Dionte Austin,** CB ★★★
3. **Rocky Reid,** RB ★★★

After the defense carried a woeful offense in 2014, help is on the way. Wake's 2015 recruiting class features a tremendous group of offensive talent. Tight end Bowman Archibald, QB Kendall Hinton and WR Tabari Hines are all very talented and all early enrollees that competed in spring drills. Meanwhile, we love the upside on big RB Rocky Reid, WR Steven Claude and lineman Nathan Gilliam. On defense, CB Dionte Austin has elite upside.

Marquel Lee

LEE: GARRY JONES / AP

As experiments went, Wake Forest's 2014 season was a fairly predictable one. With an offense littered almost entirely with new starters, including a true freshman quarterback behind an unusually raw line, little success was expected.

Little came as coach Dave Clawson undertook the beginning stages of the Demon Deacons' reconstruction project. Wake Forest never scored more than 24 points in a game and ranked last nationally in total offense.

Clearly, any progress the Demon Deacons make this season will stem from strides on that side of the ball. That will start with quarterback John Wolford, who impressively managed to start every game last fall despite playing behind a line that surrendered four sacks an outing. He'll have one of his favorite targets, sophomore tight end Cam Serigne (54 receptions), back as well.

Wolford will play behind a line that returns three starters and should presumably be better prepared to establish a semblance of a rushing attack. The Demon Deacons ran for at least 75 yards just twice all season, and a maturing line (coupled with a plethora of redshirted options) should lead to some improvement on the ground.

Wake Forest's biggest defensive questions are in the secondary, where three multi-year starters (including cornerbacks Kevin Johnson and Merrill Noel) graduated. But the team's top three tacklers—safety Ryan Janvion and linebackers Brandon Chubb and Marquel Lee—are back, and an extra season in the 4-2-5 scheme figures to help the Demon Deacons' entire defense.

The kicking game appears set, with Aussie punter Alexander Kinal coming off a second-team All-ACC season. Sophomore Mike Weaver was 15-for-19 on field-goal attempts and connected twice in overtime against Virginia Tech to secure Wake's lone conference victory.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Marquel Lee, LB

As a sophomore last season Lee displayed a propensity to attack anything moving. Few ballcarriers escaped the reach of the 6-3, 235-pound linebacker, who topped 100 tackles on the season and had 12 tackles for loss despite having to share the spoils with two other teammates who also topped 100. His comrades in Wake's 100-tackle trio—Brandon Chubb and Ryan Janvion—also return.

BOTTOM LINE

Wake Forest is still extremely young and probably a year away from bowl contention. But it figures to be more competitive in Clawson's second season in Winston-Salem. Look for the Demon Deacons to make incremental progress and maybe throw an extra scare or two into teams near the top of the league.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

7

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	Elon	
S.12	@SYRACUSE	7-30
S.19	@ARMY	24-21
S.26	Indiana	
O.3	Florida State	3-43
O.10	@BOSTON COLLEGE	17-23
O.17	@NORTH CAROLINA	
O.24	N.C. State	13-42
O.30	Louisville	10-20
N.14	@NOTRE DAME	
N.21	@CLEMSON	20-34
N.28	Duke	21-41

COACH

Dave Clawson

Second year (3-9)
Career record: 93-90

Offensive coordinator: Warren Ruggiero (second year)
Defensive coordinators: Mike Elko (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: BB&T Field (31,500)
Tickets: 1-888-758-DEAC
Site: Winston-Salem, N.C.
Website: wakeforestsports.com
Twitter: @WakeFB

GEORGIA TECH

YELLOW JACKETS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 12

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 1

P.J. Davis

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	Alcorn State	
S.12	Tulane	38-21
S.19	@ NOTRE DAME	
S.26	@ DUKE	25-31
O.3	North Carolina	43-48
O.10	@ CLEMSON	28-6
O.17	Pittsburgh	56-28
O.24	Florida State	35-37
O.31	@ VIRGINIA	35-10
N.12	Virginia Tech	27-24
N.21	@ MIAMI (FL)	28-17
N.28	Georgia	30-24

COACH

Paul Johnson
Eighth year (59-35)
Career record: 166-74

Offensive coordinator:
Paul Johnson (eighth year)
Defensive coordinator:
Ted Roof (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 11-3
(Beat Mississippi State in the Orange Bowl, 49-34)
Stadium: Bobby Dodd Stadium (55,000)
Tickets: 888-TECH-TIX
Site: Atlanta
Website: ramblinwreck.com
Twitter: @GeorgiaTechFB

Midway through last October, Georgia Tech was square in the middle of the ACC Coastal Division muddle, sitting at 2-2 in conference after a 48-43 loss at North Carolina, its 5-0 start a distant memory.

But a convincing win at Pittsburgh started the ball rolling on a fantastic season-ending run. The Yellow Jackets won six of their last seven games, the only loss coming by two points to Florida State in the ACC Championship Game. A dominant win over SEC foe Mississippi State gave the Yellow Jackets their first win in a New Year's Six bowl since a Sugar Bowl victory in 1956, and with so much returning on defense, Georgia Tech enters the season as the prohibitive favorite to win the Coastal and make a return trip to the ACC title game.

For Paul Johnson's team to reach expectations, though, it will need to find some answers at the offensive skill positions, most notably at receiver and at running back. Johnson can take solace in the return of quarterback Justin Thomas, who was an unknown heading into last season but shined as a sophomore, finishing with 1,719 passing yards and 1,086 rushing yards. He accounted for 26 touchdowns.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

P.J. Davis, LB

Georgia Tech is a virtual lock to be among the nation's leaders in rushing offense this season, but to win the Ramblin' Wreck is going to have to get some defensive stops. Enter Davis. The Cairo, Ga., native staked his claim as one of the ACC's top young linebackers, leading the Yellow Jackets with 119 tackles and recording 8.5 tackles for loss, four sacks and three forced fumbles. All-ACC honors are on the agenda for 2015.

The key to Thomas' continued improvement is consistency. He completed just 51.3 percent of his passes last year and had six interceptions.

Departed running backs Synjyn Days, Zach Laskey, Charles Perkins and Tony Zenon

DAVIS: LYNNE SLADKY / AP

combined for 2,511 yards and 22 touchdowns on the ground, and finding answers at the A-back and B-back positions was the priority of the spring.

Johnson thought C.J. Leggett could contribute immediately as a freshman last year, but with so many seniors ahead of him on the depth chart, Johnson chose to redshirt him. Leggett and true freshman Quaide Weimerskirch will get the first looks at B-back, and Dennis Andrews, Isiah Willis and Broderick Snoddy are the frontrunners for playing time at A-back.

Another question mark is at receiver, where Micheal Summers and Ricky Jeune will be tasked with taking bigger roles after the departure of DeAndre Smelter and Darren Waller.

The other focus in the spring was defensive improvement. Georgia Tech returns eight starters, plus defensive lineman Jabari Hunt-Days, who was academically ineligible for the 2014 season. Hunt-Days spent last year practicing with the scout team.

The Yellow Jackets ranked 14th in FBS in turnover margin last season, but that was one of the few bright spots statistically. The Jackets ranked 62nd in rush defense, 87th in passing yards allowed, 52nd in scoring defense and 114th in third-down-conversion-percentage defense. The Yellow Jackets are experienced on the back end, with senior corners Chris Milton and D.J. White returning, as well as senior safety Jamal Golden.

Kicker Harrison Butker returns after an up-and-down season in which he nailed a 53-yard field goal but was just six-for-13 from 30 yards out or longer. He was especially shaky in the 30-39-yard range, missing five of his seven kicks.

BOTTOM LINE

The early schedule is favorable for a team trying to assess what it has at running back and receiver, as the Yellow Jackets will open with home games against FCS Alcorn State and Tulane before traveling to Notre Dame and Duke in consecutive weeks. Georgia Tech gets Florida State and Virginia Tech at home. The Yellow Jackets went 11-3 a year ago and are looking for back-to-back 10-win seasons for the first time since their stadium's namesake, Bobby Dodd, was coaching in 1951 and 1952. Thomas will be key in bringing the young running backs and receivers along, and if Tech survives that early road stretch, it will have a strong chance of returning to Charlotte in December.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Georgia Tech is the rare program that doesn't always see recruiting rankings align with its AP rankings and coach Paul Johnson's 2015 effort is another solid but not spectacular group that will probably compete for ACC titles. In particular we love the linebacker group, led by Victor Alexander, Tyler Cooksey and Brant Mitchell. We also think Brad Stewart could be a future star at wide receiver and was a late in-state steal out of Savannah, Ga.

TOP SIGNEES

247 SCAN RATING

1 • **Christian Philpott,** WR ★★★
2 • **Anree St. Amour,** DE ★★★
3 • **Victor Alexander,** LB ★★★

MASCOT: MIKE STEWART / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Justin Thomas	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	14	153.9	96-187-6	51.3	1719	18	122.8

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Justin Thomas	14	190	1086	5.7	8	77.6

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Micheal Summers	14	7	45	6.4	0	3.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
P.J. Davis	14	82	37	119

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
KeShun Freeman	14	4.5	23

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Jamal Golden	4	87	21.8	1
D.J. White	4	48	12.0	1

BEHIND THE MASK

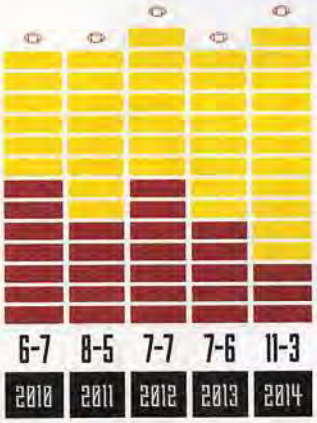
Buzz, first seen in 1972, is a Yellow Jacket that pays homage to fans as far back as the 1890s who used to wear yellow jackets to support Georgia Tech teams. Former coach John Heisman asked for his teams to be referred to as Yellow Jackets beginning in 1905.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	GT	OPP
SCORING	530	360
Points Per Game	37.9	25.7
FIRST DOWNS	350	300
Rushing	259	125
Passing	78	160
Penalty	13	15
RUSHING YARDAGE	4789	2346
Yards gained rushing	5048	2615
Yards lost rushing	259	269
Rushing Attempts	790	463
Average Per Rush	6.1	5.1
Average Per Game	342.1	167.6
TDs Rushing	47	24
PASSING YARDAGE	1882	3412
Comp-Att-Int	106-203-6	282-448-18
Average Per Pass	9.3	7.6
Average Per Catch	17.8	12.1
Average Per Game	134.4	243.7
TDs Passing	19	19
TOTAL OFFENSE	6671	5758
Total Plays	993	911
Average Per Play	6.7	6.3
Average Per Game	476.5	411.3
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	41-892	33-747
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-97	16-105
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	18-338	6-27
KICK RETURN AVG.	21.8	22.6
PUNT RETURN AVG.	8.1	6.6
INT RETURN AVG.	18.8	4.5
FUMBLES-LOST	20-12	20-11
PENALTIES-YARDS	69-576	75-616
Average Per Game	41.1	44.0
PUNTS-YARDS	32-1285	41-1608
Average Per Punt	40.2	39.2
Net punt average	35.6	35.4
TIME OF POSS./GAME	34:09	25:51
3RD-DOWN CONV.	99/171	77/167
3rd-Down Pct.	58%	46%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	12/17	12/22
4th-Down Pct.	71%	55%
SACKS BY-YARDS	20-127	11-65
MISC YARDS	0	16
TDS SCORED	72	44
FG-ATTEMPTS	11-18	18-21
ATTENDANCE	291113	337451
Games/Avg Per Game	6/48519	6/56242
Neutral Site Games		2/61510

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Georgia Tech	138	126	114	146	6	530
Opponent	92	111	70	87	0	360

5-YEAR RECORD 39-28



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB Justin Thomas (5-11, 189, Jr.)
Tim Byerly (6-0, 212, Sr.)
RB C.J. Leggett (5-10, 207, Fr.)
Quaide Weimerskirch (6-0, 205, Fr.)
RB Dennis Andrews (6-0, 194, Jr.)
Broderick Snoddy (5-9, 190, Sr.)
RB Isiah Willis (5-9, 193, Jr.)
Clinton Lynch (6-0, 181, Fr.)
LT Bryan Chamberlain (6-4, 295, Sr.)
Eason Fromayan (6-4, 290, So.)
LG Trey Braun (6-5, 294, Sr.)
Gary Brown (6-3, 288, Fr.)
C Freddie Burden (6-3, 302, Jr.)
Andrew Marshall (6-4, 270, So.)
RG Shamire Devine (6-7, 365, So.)
Nick Brigham (6-3, 294, Jr.)
RT Errin Joe (6-3, 313, Sr.)
Jake Stickler (6-5, 261, Fr.)
WR Ricky Jeune (6-3, 214, So.)
Antonio Messick (6-3, 195, So.)
WR Micheal Summers (6-1, 196, Jr.)
Harland Howell (6-3, 200, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE KeShun Freeman (6-1, 236, So.)
Antonio Simmons (6-3, 228, So.)
DT Adam Gotsis (6-5, 282, Sr.)
Francis Kallon (6-5, 296, Jr.)
NT Patrick Gamble (6-5, 286, Jr.)
Jabari Hunt-Days (6-3, 261, Sr.)
DE Rod Rook-Chungong (6-3, 243, Jr.)
Tyler Merriweather (6-3, 231, So.)
SAM Anthony Harrell (6-2, 237, Sr.)
Beau Hankins (6-1, 231, Jr.)
ILB Tyler Marcordes (6-4, 235, Sr.)
Terrell Lewis (6-2, 227, So.)
WILL P.J. Davis (5-11, 218, Jr.)
Domonique Noble (6-2, 214, Sr.)
CB Chris Milton (5-11, 190, Sr.)
Lynn Griffin (6-0, 199, Jr.)
CB D.J. White (5-11, 188, Sr.)
Step Durham (5-11, 188, So.)
FS Jamal Golden (6-0, 193, Sr.)
Lawrence Austin (5-9, 184, So.)
SS Demond Smith (6-0, 191, Sr.)
Corey Griffin (6-2, 194, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K Harrison Butker (6-3, 202, Jr.)
P Ryan Rodwell (6-2, 188, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

DUKE
BLUE DEVILS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

2

DeVon Edwards

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	@ TULANE	47-13
S.12	North Carolina Central	
S.19	Northwestern	
S.26	Georgia Tech	31-25
O.3	Boston College	
O.10	@ ARMY	
O.24	@ VIRGINIA TECH	16-17
O.31	Miami (FL)	10-22
N.7	@ NORTH CAROLINA	20-45
N.14	Pittsburgh	51-48
N.21	@ VIRGINIA	20-13
N.28	@ WAKE FOREST	41-21

COACH

David Cutcliffe
Eighth year (40-48)
Career record: 84-77

Offensive coordinator:
Scottie Montgomery (second year)
Defensive coordinator:
Jim Knowles (sixth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 9-4
(Lost to Arizona State in the Sun Bowl, 36-31)
Stadium: Wallace Wade Stadium (33,941)
Tickets: 1-877-375-DUKE
Site: Durham, N.C.
Website: goduke.com
Twitter: @Duke_FB

Duke may rhyme with fluke, but no one can argue that the Blue Devils' recent run of success is an anomaly. Winning is becoming the norm in Durham.

The Blue Devils have won 25 games in the last three seasons, a run matched only by a 25-win stretch in 1936-38, when the legendary Wallace Wade roamed the sidelines. Duke has put together back-to-back winning seasons for the first time since 1988-89, Steve Spurrier's last two years in Durham.

And for those expecting the Devils to slide back into mediocrity, think again. Duke is poised to make another run at the Coastal Division crown, thanks to depth at running back and experience in the secondary.

The big question mark in the spring was how to replace quarterback Anthony Boone, who threw for 2,700 yards and 19 touchdowns last season. For the first time in several years, coach David Cutcliffe does not have an experienced quarterback waiting to take over. Instead, 6-4 redshirt junior Thomas Sirk sat atop the depth chart at the end of spring practice.

Sirk threw just 14 passes last season and completed 10, but three of them went for touchdowns. He also scored eight rushing touchdowns, so he's gotten his fair share of game action. For the first time, though, he'll be the man at quarterback. Cutcliffe has raved about Sirk's size, speed and athleticism. Cutcliffe is fond of using two quarterbacks, so expect Parker Boehme and Nicodem Pierre to be in the hunt to get touches too.

It helps that the Devils have superior backfield depth, which will allow Sirk to ease

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

DeVon Edwards, S

Edwards, a consensus All-America kick returner, expanded his role to become Duke's big hitter on defense last year. He recorded 133 tackles (including 7.5 for loss and 4.5 sacks) while also frustrating receivers with nine pass breakups and an interception. The 5-9 speedster from Covington, Ga., was also true to form as a return man, with 745 return yards (fourth on the team in all-purpose yards) and a touchdown.

EDWARDS: DON WRIGHT / AP

into his new role.

Shaquille Powell ran for 618 yards and two touchdowns last season, and speedy sophomore Shaun Wilson, who had the Devils' longest run of the year (a 69-yard touchdown), is back as well. Jela Duncan, who sat out last season due to an academic suspension, returns.

Duke will need to find some production at receiver after the departure of the dependable Jamison Crowder, who caught 85 passes for 1,044 yards and six touchdowns a year ago. Max McCaffrey, Johnell Barnes and Anthony Nash will get the primary looks at receiver. Tight end Braxton Deaver, who missed last season with an injury, returns to team up with David Reeves, who caught three touchdown passes a year ago.

Defensively, the Blue Devils were a middle-of-the-road team last year, but they return a ton of experience, especially on the back end. They'll also welcome back middle linebacker Kelby Brown, who was expected to be the team's leading linebacker before tearing his ACL in August. Like Deaver, he was granted a sixth year of eligibility.

The biggest concern defensively is up front, where the Devils have struggled to develop defensive line depth in recent years. Only one starter returns, tackle Carlos Wray. The new faces at defensive end are mostly converted linebackers. Brown could spend time at both linebacker and as a speedy rush end.

Two of the ACC's top specialists–kicker Ross Martin and punter Will Monday–return for their senior seasons. Martin went 19-for-21 on field-goal attempts last season, with both misses coming from 40 yards out or more.

BOTTOM LINE

The recent success has translated into increased giving, which has funded a much-needed renovation to Wallace Wade Stadium, which is getting a new video board and a five-story press tower. Now that Duke has established itself as a consistent player in the ACC, the next step might be to improve the nonconference schedule, which includes Tulane, N.C. Central, Northwestern and Army. The Devils will need to play well early because they finish with five of their last seven on the road. Both Miami and Georgia Tech visit Durham, key games for Duke if it wants to challenge for the Coastal title.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

You know Duke is on the rise when two members of its 2015 class (LB/S Ben Humphreys and WR TJ Rahming) not only played in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl but were standouts in their appearance. Humphreys joins big receiver Aaron Young and offensive tackle Reno Rosene to complete what has been a strong push by Duke into the state of California as a national brand. If you're looking for a potential sleeper, keep an eye on Brandon Feamster out of the Philadelphia area. The Duke coaching staff loves the 6-3, 190-pound safety.

TOP SIGNEES

- Ben Humphreys, LB/S ★★★★
- TJ Rahming, WR ★★★
- Reno Rosene, OT ★★★

MASCOT: CHUCK BURTON / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Thomas Sirk	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	12	182.3	10-14-0	71.4	67	3	5.6

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Shaquille Powell	12	134	618	4.6	2	51.5

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Max McCaffrey	13	37	385	10.4	3	29.6

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
DeVon Edwards	13	77	56	133

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Jeremy Cash	13	5.5	43

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Breon Borders	3	15	5.0	0

BEHIND THE MASK

The **Blue Devil** gets its origin from a group of French soldiers in World War I called the "Blue Devils." William H. Lander and Mike Bradshaw, two editors of the *Trinity Chronicle*, referred to the football team as the Blue Devils during the 1922-23 academic year, and the name stuck shortly after.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	DUKE	OPP
SCORING	421	283
Points Per Game	32.4	21.8
FIRST DOWNS	286	285
Rushing	133	152
Passing	130	118
Penalty	23	15
RUSHING YARDAGE	2364	2508
Yards gained rushing	2547	2884
Yards lost rushing	183	376
Rushing Attempts	492	564
Average Per Rush	4.8	4.4
Average Per Game	181.8	192.9
TDs Rushing	24	19
PASSING YARDAGE	2814	2688
Comp-Att-Int	268-471-8	235-421-11
Average Per Pass	6.0	6.4
Average Per Catch	10.5	11.4
Average Per Game	216.5	206.8
TDs Passing	23	14
TOTAL OFFENSE	5178	5196
Total Plays	963	985
Average Per Play	5.4	5.3
Average Per Game	398.3	399.7
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	36-909	51-1186
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	24-325	16-33
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	11-159	8-89
KICK RETURN AVG.	25.2	23.3
PUNT RETURN AVG.	13.5	2.1
INT RETURN AVG.	14.5	11.1
FUMBLES-LOST	22-7	22-10
PENALTIES-YARDS	64-503	89-785
Average Per Game	38.7	60.4
PUNTS-YARDS	59-2537	63-2603
Average Per Punt	43.0	41.3
Net punt average	39.7	34.9
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:07	30:49
3RD-DOWN CONV.	84/201	64/186
3rd-Down Pct.	42%	34%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	16/29	9/31
4th-Down Pct.	55%	29%
SACKS BY-YARDS	29-227	13-91
MISC YARDS	7	0
TDS SCORED	52	34
FG-ATTEMPTS	19-21	17-22
ATTENDANCE	191039	188795
Games/Avg Per Game	7/27291	5/37759
Neutral Site Games		1/47809

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Duke	115	106	84	103	13	421
Opponent	80	81	56	56	10	283

5-YEAR RECORD 31-33

DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Thomas Sirk (6-4, 215, Jr.)
	Parker Boehme (6-2, 220, So.)
RB	Shaquille Powell (5-10, 205, Sr.)
	Shaun Wilson (5-9, 180, So.)
LT	Gabe Brandner (6-6, 275, So.)
	Tanner Stone (6-6, 300, Jr.)
LG	Lucas Patrick (6-4, 305, Sr.)
	Cody Robinson (6-3, 295, Sr.)
C	Matt Skura (6-4, 305, Sr.)
	Austin Davis (6-4, 285, So.)
RG	Sterling Korona (6-7, 290, So.)
	Cody Robinson (6-3, 295, Sr.)
RT	Casey Blaser (6-5, 285, Jr.)
	Tanner Stone (6-6, 300, Jr.)
TE	Braxton Deaver (6-5, 240, Sr.)
	David Reeves (6-5, 255, Sr.)
WR	Max McCaffrey (6-2, 195, Sr.)
	Terrence Alls (6-1, 180, So.)
WR	Johnell Barnes (6-0, 170, Jr.)
	Anthony Nash (6-5, 200, Jr.)
WR	Anthony Nash (6-5, 200, Jr.)
	Ryan Smith (5-7, 165, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Kyler Brown (6-4, 245, Sr.)
	Britton Grier (6-1, 245, Sr.)
DT	A.J. Wolf (6-4, 270, Jr.)
	Keilin Rayner (6-3, 260, Jr.)
DT	Carlos Wray (6-2, 290, Sr.)
	Mike Ramsay (6-2, 295, So.)
DE	Deion Williams (6-0, 230, Sr.)
	Michael Mann (6-4, 235, Jr.)
MLB	Kelby Brown (6-2, 230, Sr.)
	Tinashe Bere (6-1, 220, Fr.)
WLB	Chris Holmes (6-2, 215, So.)
	Zavier Carmichael (6-0, 210, So.)
CB	Bryon Fields (5-11, 180, Jr.)
	Alonzo Saxton II (5-11, 170, So.)
CB	Breon Borders (6-0, 175, Jr.)
	Zach Muniz (5-11, 170, So.)
S	Deondre Singleton (5-11, 180, Jr.)
	Evrett Edwards (5-11, 190, So.)
S	Jeremy Cash (6-2, 205, Sr.)
	Corbin McCarthy (5-10, 200, Jr.)
S	DeVon Edwards (5-9, 175, Jr.)
	Dwayne Norman (6-1, 210, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Ross Martin (5-10, 185, Sr.)
P	Will Monday (6-4, 210, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

VIRGINIA TECH
HOKIES

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

3

Isaiah Ford

FORD: STEVE HELBER / AP

It was fashionable for Virginia Tech fans to root for Ohio State in last year's College Football Playoff, considering the Buckeyes' lone loss came to Virginia Tech in Columbus. That game in the season's second week proved to be the high-water mark for the Hokies, who endured injury after injury and needed a win over rival Virginia in the regular-season finale to extend their streak of bowl appearances to 22 seasons.

Tech's injured list by November was staggering. Offensive lineman Jonathan McLaughlin, running backs Shai McKenzie and Trey Edmunds, cornerback Brandon Facyson, defensive tackle Luther Maddy, tight end Kalvin Cline and linebacker Chase Williams all missed significant portions of the season due to injury. The coaching staff wasn't immune either. Coach Frank Beamer had throat surgery in early December, and unable to speak, missed the Hokies' Military Bowl win over Cincinnati. Assistant Shane Beamer coached in his father's place.

That win at Ohio State gives the Hokies hope that the injuries were the main reason for last season's inconsistency. Take November as an example. In one week, Tech beat Duke on the road, costing the Blue Devils a shot at the Coastal title. The next week, the Hokies lost 6-3 to Wake Forest in a double-overtime game that was scoreless at the end of regulation.

There were bright spots last season amid the injuries. Running back J.C. Coleman took advantage of his opportunity and rushed for 533 yards and three touchdowns. Freshmen Isaiah Ford and Cam Phillips combined for 1,207 yards and nine touchdowns at receiver, and freshman tight end Bucky Hodges caught 45 passes for 526 yards and a team-best seven TDs. Quarterback Michael Brewer, a Texas Tech transfer who didn't start practicing with

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.7	Ohio State	35-21
S.12	Furman	
S.19	@PURDUE	
S.26	@EAST CAROLINA	21-28
O.3	Pittsburgh	16-21
O.9	N.C. State	
O.17	@MIAMI (FL)	6-30
O.24	Duke	17-16
O.31	@BOSTON COLLEGE	31-33
N.12	@GEORGIA TECH	24-27
N.21	North Carolina	34-17
N.28	@VIRGINIA	24-20

COACH
Frank Beamer
29th year (231-115-2)
Career record: 273-138-4

Offensive coordinator: Scot Loeffler (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Bud Foster (21st year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat Cincinnati in the Military Bowl, 33-17)
Stadium: Lane Stadium (65,632)
Tickets: 800-828-3244
Site: Blacksburg, Va.
Website: hokiesports.com
Twitter: @VT_Football

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Isaiah Ford, WR

Ford came to Virginia Tech in 2014 as one of the top 50 prep wideouts in the nation, according to various recruiting services. It didn't take long for him to become No. 1 in Blacksburg. He led the Hokies' receiving corps as a freshman with 56 catches and 709 yards, pulling down six TDs. The 6-1, 174-pounder also expressed a desire to walk on to the basketball team—though he didn't—which wouldn't have been a bad idea considering he averaged 30.1 points per game as senior in high school at Trinity Christian Academy in Jacksonville, Fla.

the team until the summer, has a full year and a full offseason under his belt. Though he threw for 2,692 yards and 18 touchdowns, he crippled his team with interceptions at times, finishing with 15.

Coleman, Marshawn Williams and Edmunds are all back. Sophomore Shai McKenzie was suspended in the spring after getting into some legal trouble, and his status for the upcoming season is unclear.

Tech's strength again will be its defense, led by longtime coordinator Bud Foster, who was in serious talks with Texas A&M in the offseason but remained in Blacksburg. The Hokies return top defensive end Dadi Nicolas, and Maddy and Corey Marshall are expected back at full strength by the time fall practice begins in August. Ronny Vandyke and Andrew Motuapuaka, who was surprisingly productive as a freshman, return in the linebacking corps, as does Deon Clarke.

Kendall Fuller and Facyson sat out the spring with ailments, but both cornerbacks are expected to be ready when the season begins. Tech has depth there with Greg Stroman and Chuck Clark getting most of the spring reps in the starters' absence. Physical senior Donovan Riley moved from cornerback to safety, and C.J. Reavis and Desmond Frye are battling for time at rover.

Joey Slye is back at kicker after a strong freshman season. He went 20-for-28 on field goals, though four of his misses were from 50 yards out or longer.

BOTTOM LINE

Frank Beamer is back healthy, and he can only hope the rest of his team follows suit. The Hokies will get another crack at Ohio State on Labor Day, this time likely as a rare double-digit underdog at home at Lane Stadium. Outside of the opener against the defending national champions, the schedule is manageable, though the Hokies will finish with four of six away from Blacksburg, including a trip to ACC Coastal favorite Georgia Tech. The freshman receivers were outstanding last year, and if they mature as expected, the passing attack should be better. Improvement in the run game and on the offensive line will likely dictate if Virginia Tech can contend for the Coastal title.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

The offensive side of the ball in Blacksburg has had some hiccups of late but the arrival of quarterback Dwayne Lawson could go a long way towards a remedy. Productive back DeShawn McClease should help too, along with four-star offensive tackles Austin Clark and Yosuah Nijman, who moved over from defensive tackle in the spring. The defensive line should continue to be strong with Darius Fullwood, Trevon Hill and Tim Settle headlining a loaded defensive line class. Defensive back is always a Hokie strength as well, and Mook Reynolds at cornerback looks poised to continue that trend.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Tim Settle, DT ★★★★
2. Dwayne Lawson, QB ★★★★
3. Austin Clark, OT ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Michael Brewer	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	13	117.4	262-441-15	59.4	2692	18	207.1

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
J.C. Coleman	13	107	533	5.0	3	41.0

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Isaiah Ford	13	56	709	12.7	6	54.5

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Deon Clarke	13	30	44	74

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Ken Ekanem	13	9.5	72

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Donovan Riley	2	75	37.5	1
Kendall Fuller	2	47	23.5	1

MASCOT: WILFREDO LEE / AP

BEHIND THE MASK

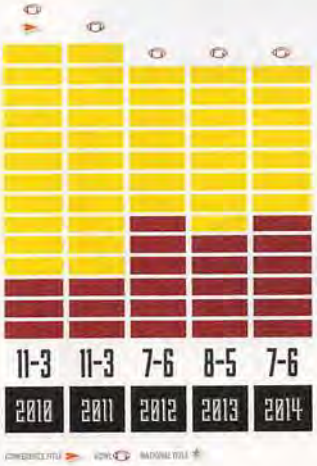
Virginia Tech's teams were referred to as the Gobblers beginning in 1908, but the **Hokie Bird** (named after the "Old Hokie Cheer") debuted at the 1981 Wake Forest game, resulting in the official team nickname of Hokies.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	VT	OPP
SCORING	313	262
Points Per Game	24.1	20.2
FIRST DOWNS	261	216
Rushing	105	95
Passing	130	105
Penalty	26	16
RUSHING YARDAGE	1923	1882
Yards gained rushing	2331	2435
Yards lost rushing	408	553
Rushing Attempts	507	484
Average Per Rush	3.8	3.9
Average Per Game	147.9	144.8
TDs Rushing	12	15
PASSING YARDAGE	2826	2587
Comp-Att-Int	271-456-15	183-384-12
Average Per Pass	6.2	6.7
Average Per Catch	10.4	14.1
Average Per Game	217.4	199.0
TDs Passing	19	13
TOTAL OFFENSE	4749	4469
Total Plays	963	868
Average Per Play	4.9	5.1
Average Per Game	365.3	343.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	36-702	46-937
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	45-315	29-89
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-228	15-94
KICK RETURN AVG.	19.5	20.4
PUNT RETURN AVG.	7.0	3.1
INT RETURN AVG.	19.0	6.3
FUMBLES-LOST	21-11	19-10
PENALTIES-YARDS	98-770	91-768
Average Per Game	59.2	59.1
PUNTS-YARDS	83-3314	83-3527
Average Per Punt	39.9	42.5
Net punt average	37.9	38.2
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:25	28:35
3RD-DOWN CONV.	83/213	57/198
3rd-Down Pct.	39%	29%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	7-14	5-18
4th-Down Pct.	50%	28%
SACKS BY-YARDS	48-352	34-279
MISC YARDS	0	7
TDS SCORED	36	30
FG-ATTEMPTS	20-28	18-32
ATTENDANCE	428099	268569
Games/Avg Per Game	7-61157	5-53714
Neutral Site Games		1-34277

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Virginia Tech	73	76	51	110	3	313
Opponent	74	68	25	89	6	262

5-YEAR RECORD 44-23



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Michael Brewer (6-0, 200, Sr.)
	Brenden Motley (6-4, 228, Jr.)
RB	J.C. Coleman (5-7, 190, Sr.)
	Trey Edmunds (6-1, 225, Jr.)
FB	Jerome Wright (6-2, 231, Jr.)
	Logan Adkins (5-11, 208, Fr.)
LT	Jonathan McLaughlin (6-5, 310, Jr.)
	Darius Redman (6-4, 285, Sr.)
LG	Wyatt Teller (6-6, 295, So.)
	Alston Smith (6-2, 294, Jr.)
C	Eric Gallo (6-2, 293, So.)
	Tyrell Smith (6-4, 280, Fr.)
RG	Augie Conte (6-6, 297, Jr.)
	Colt Pettit (6-3, 291, Fr.)
RT	Wade Hansen (6-5, 300, Sr.)
	Parker Osterloh (6-8, 343, So.)
TE	Ryan Malleck (6-5, 245, Sr.)
	Bucky Hodges (6-6, 249, So.)
WR	Isaiah Ford (6-1, 180, So.)
	Kevin Asante (6-0, 189, Sr.)
WR	Cam Phillips (6-1, 196, So.)
	Demetri Knowles (6-1, 177, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Dadi Nicolas (6-4, 236, Sr.)
	Melvin Keihn (6-1, 211, So.)
NG	Luther Maddy (6-1, 293, Sr.)
	Woody Baron (6-1, 265, Jr.)
DT	Corey Marshall (6-2, 262, Sr.)
	Nigel Williams (6-2, 288, Jr.)
DE	Seth Dooley (6-5, 242, So.)
	Yosuah Nijman (6-7, 265, Fr.)
WLB	Ronny Vandyke (6-4, 219, Sr.)
	Holland Fisher (6-1, 180, Fr.)
MLB	Andrew Motuapuaka (6-0, 223, So.)
	Carson Lydon (6-2, 241, Fr.)
LB	Deon Clarke (6-2, 213, Sr.)
	Jamieon Moss (6-1, 211, So.)
CB	Kendall Fuller (6-0, 197, Jr.)
	Greg Stroman (6-0, 160, So.)
CB	Brandon Facyson (6-2, 184, So.)
	Chuck Clark (6-0, 206, Jr.)
FS	C.J. Reavis (6-1, 205, So.)
	Desmond Frye (6-2, 196, Jr.)
ROV	Donovan Riley (5-11, 210, Sr.)
	Anthony Shegog (6-2, 212, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Joey Slye (5-10, 221, So.)
P	Mitchell Ludwig (5-11, 194, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

MIAMI
HURRICANES

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

4

Atlantic Coast - Coastal

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Bethune-Cookman	
S.11	@ FLORIDA ATLANTIC	
S.19	Nebraska	31-41
O.1	@ CINCINNATI	55-34
O.10	@ FLORIDA STATE	26-30
O.17	Virginia Tech	30-6
O.24	Clemson	
O.31	@ DUKE	22-10
N.7	Virginia	13-30
N.14	@ NORTH CAROLINA	47-20
N.21	Georgia Tech	17-28
N.27	@ PITTSBURGH	23-35

COACH

Al Golden
Fifth year (28-22)
Career record: 55-56

Offensive coordinator: James Coley (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Mark D'Onofrio (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to South Carolina in the Independence Bowl, 24-21)
Stadium: Sun Life Stadium (65,326)
Tickets: 305-284-2263
Site: Coral Gables, Fla.
Website: hurricanesports.com
Twitter: @CanesFootball

Brad Kaaya

Miami's 2014 season was one of peaks and valleys. The Hurricanes were riding high two weeks into November after consecutive wins over Cincinnati, Virginia Tech and North Carolina. The win at home against UNC was the last time the Hurricanes tasted victory, though, as they fell off the map at the end of the year.

Miami lost its final four games, including an ugly rout at Virginia. A 24-21 loss to South Carolina in the Independence Bowl left the Hurricanes with a losing record for the first time in coach Al Golden's four-year tenure.

Perhaps that's why the end of Miami's spring game was so important to sophomore quarterback Brad Kaaya, who wanted to see his team show some fire in an adverse situation, even if it was in a scrimmage. If Miami is going to crack the upper echelon of the Coastal Division standings, the Hurricanes are going to need to learn how to finish strong.

Kaaya is coming off a strong freshman year in which he threw for 3,198 yards and 26 touchdowns while completing 58.5 percent of his passes. He also tossed 12 interceptions. Top rusher Duke Johnson is gone, and sophomore Joseph Yearby is expected to assume lead-tailback duties.

The Hurricanes return several key contributors from a defensive unit that finished 14th in FBS total defense last year, including linebacker Raphael Kirby and safeties Rayshawn Jenkins and Deon Bush.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

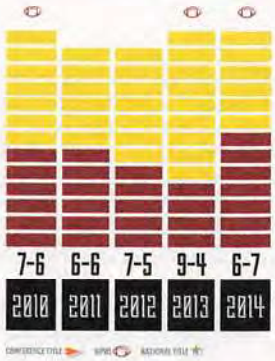
Brad Kaaya, QB

Kaaya has a lot on his plate. The 6-4 sophomore will look to build upon his 3,198 passing yards and 26 touchdowns, which set Miami freshman records last year. Coaches and teammates also belive that, with his bright future in the program, Kaaya can help attract recruits from as far west as his native southern California—a difficult task even for the U. In the meantime, though, he'll have to rejuvenate a squad that dropped its last four games in 2014.

BOTTOM LINE

Miami has yet to appear in an ACC Championship Game and its last 10-win season was 12 years ago. The dip from 9-4 in 2013 to 6-7 last year has warmed Golden's seat considerably. Miami will find out quickly how improved it is. After opening against Bethune-Cookman and Florida Atlantic, it faces Nebraska, Cincinnati, Florida State, Virginia Tech, Clemson and Duke in succession.

5-YEAR RECORD 35-28



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Brad Kaaya (6-4, 209, So.)
TB	Joseph Yearby (5-9, 195, So.)
LT	Trevor Darling (6-5, 318, So.)
LG	Danny Isidora (6-4, 322, Jr.)
C	Nick Linder (6-3, 300, So.)
RG	Hunter Wells (6-6, 316, Sr.)
RT	Taylor Gadbois (6-8, 321, Jr.)
TE	Standish Dobard (6-4, 262, Jr.)
WR	Rashawn Scott (6-2, 205, Sr.)
WR	Stacy Coley (6-1, 187, Jr.)
WR	Braxton Berrios (5-9, 183, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Chad Thomas (6-5, 265, So.)
DT	Calvin Heurtelou (6-3, 315, Sr.)
DT	Ufomba Kamalu (6-6, 295, Sr.)
DE	Al-Quadin Muhammad (6-3, 260, So.)
LB	Darrion Owens (6-3, 238, So.)
LB	Jermaine Grace (6-1, 208, Jr.)
LB	Raphael Kirby (6-1, 235, Sr.)
CB	Artie Burns (6-0, 193, Jr.)
CB	Tracy Howard (5-11, 191, Sr.)
S	Rayshawn Jenkins (6-1, 209, Jr.)
S	Deon Bush (6-1, 205, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Michael Badgley (5-10, 180, So.)
P	Justin Vogel (6-4, 208, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1 • **Mark Walton,** RB ★★★★
2 • **Jaquan Johnson,** S ★★★★
3 • **Bar Milo,** OT ★★★★

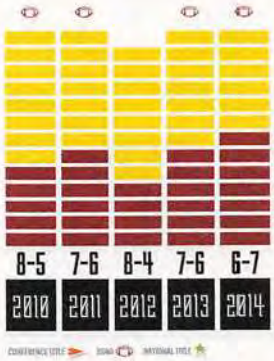
Miami has reinvigorated its local recruiting efforts behind the signing of Miami Booker T. Washington four-star back Mark Walton and four-star safety Jaquan Johnson but it had a very national presence as well. Al Golden signed big tackle Bar Milo out of the same California high school that produced Brad Kaaya, U.S. Army All-American Lawrence Cager out of Maryland has a chance to be special wide receiver and sleeper tight end Jerome Washington out of the juco ranks has tremendous upside.

KAAYA: ALANDIAZ / AP

NORTH CAROLINA

TAR HEELS

5-YEAR RECORD 36-28



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

- **QB** Marquise Williams (6-2, 220, Sr.)
- **RB** T.J. Logan (5-10, 185, Jr.)
- **LT** John Ferranto (6-6, 295, Jr.)
- **LG** Caleb Peterson (6-5, 300, Jr.)
- **C** Lucas Crowley (6-3, 290, Jr.)
- **RG** Landon Turner (6-4, 325, Sr.)
- **RT** Jon Heck (6-7, 300, Jr.)
- **TE** Brandon Fritts (6-4, 240, Fr.)
- **WR** Quinshad Davis (6-4, 210, Sr.)
- **WR** Ryan Switzer (5-10, 185, Jr.)
- **WR** Bug Howard (6-5, 210, Jr.)

DEFENSE

- **DE** Dajuan Drennon (6-4, 250, So.)
- **DT** Nazair Jones (6-5, 300, So.)
- **NT** Justin Thomason (6-4, 290, Sr.)
- **LB** Shakeel Rashad (6-2, 245, Sr.)
- **LB** Cayson Collins (6-1, 235, So.)
- **LB** Jeff Schoettmer (6-2, 235, Sr.)
- **BAN** Malik Simmons (5-11, 190, Sr.)
- **CB** Brian Walker (5-11, 185, Jr.)
- **CB** Des Lawrence (6-1, 185, Jr.)
- **S** Allen Artis (6-1, 205, So.)
- **S** Dominique Green (5-11, 190, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

- **K** Nick Weiler (6-0, 190, Jr.)
- **P** Joey Mangili (6-3, 205, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 SKILL RATING

1. **Jalen Dalton,** DE ★★★★
2. **Tommy Hatten,** C ★★★★
3. **William Sweet,** OT ★★★★

With nine early enrollees, North Carolina has some potential early contributor candidates in the 2015 class but nobody has more long-term upside than Jalen Dalton. The in-state prospect is long and athletic but still raw and still developing. The same can be said for offensive tackle William Sweet on the offensive line of scrimmage. At center, New Jersey native Tommy Hatton comes in ready to compete from a toughness and technical standpoint.

Marquise Williams

WILLIAMS: GERRY BROOME / AP

By the numbers, at least, North Carolina appears poised to have one of the best offenses in the ACC in 2015. The Tar Heels return every offensive player who matters from last year's squad, which averaged 33.2 points per game. Quarterback Marquise Williams threw for 3,068 yards and rushed for 788. He threw for 21 touchdowns and ran for 13, including a 52-yard scoring scamper.

The entire two-deep depth chart returns on the offensive line, as does top tailback T.J. Logan and receivers Ryan Switzer and Bug Howard. Quinshad Davis broke his leg in UNC's bowl loss to Rutgers but is expected back by the time the season starts. With so much continuity, UNC is expected to take a big step forward offensively.

Where UNC really struggled over the course of a 6-7 season in 2014, though, was on defense. The Tar Heels were awful across the board, ranking 101st or worst in the FBS in every major statistical category. They allowed 39 points per game and gave up 40-plus points six different times, including allowing 70 to in-state rival East Carolina. Teams converted third downs on UNC at a 49-percent clip.

Carolina brought in former Auburn and Iowa State head coach Gene Chizik to try to revamp the defensive unit. The biggest challenge will be figuring out where some of the hybrid linebacker/safeties and linebacker/defensive ends fit into the new scheme.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Marquise Williams, QB

Williams led the high-scoring Tar Heels to six 40-point games last season. The 6-2, 220-pound senior from Charlotte threw for 3,068 yards and 21 touchdowns and led UNC in rushing with 788 yards and 13 rushing TDs. In a 48-43 win in October against Orange Bowl champ Georgia Tech, Williams set a school record with 38 completions, including six during the game-winning drive.

BOTTOM LINE

Larry Fedora had no choice but to part ways with coordinator Vic Koenning after last year's defensive debacle. Hiring Chizik away from the SEC Network was a coup for Fedora, considering Chizik's defensive credentials. The Tar Heels play only four true road games this season and host two FCS opponents (North Carolina A&T and Delaware), so the new-look defense will have a chance to jell before a critical Oct. 3 game at Georgia Tech.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

5

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	South Carolina (at Charlotte, NC)	
S.12	North Carolina A&T	
S.19	Illinois	
S.26	Delaware	
O.3	@GEORGIA TECH	48-43
O.17	Wake Forest	
O.24	Virginia	28-27
O.29	@PITTSBURGH	40-35
N.7	Duke	45-20
N.14	Miami (FL)	20-47
N.21	@VIRGINIA TECH	17-34
N.28	@N.C. STATE	7-35

COACH

Larry Fedora

Fourth year (21-17)
Career record: 55-36

Offensive coordinators: Gunter Brewer (third year) and Chris Kapilovic (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Gene Chizik (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to Rutgers in the Quick Lane Bowl, 40-21)
Stadium: Kenan Memorial Stadium (63,000)
Tickets: 800-722-4335
Site: Chapel Hill, N.C.
Website: goheels.com
Twitter: @TarHeelFootball

PITTSBURGH

PANTHERS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

6

James Conner

Atlantic Coast – Coastal

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Youngstown State	
S.12	@ AKRON	10-21
S.19	@ IOWA	20-24
O.3	@ VIRGINIA TECH	21-16
O.10	Virginia	19-24
O.17	@ GEORGIA TECH	28-56
O.24	@ SYRACUSE	30-7
O.29	North Carolina	35-40
N.7	Notre Dame	
N.14	@ DUKE	48-51
N.21	Louisville	
N.27	Miami (FL)	35-23

COACH

Pat Narduzzi
First year

Offensive coordinator: Jim Chaney (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Josh Conklin (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to Houston in the Armed Forces Bowl, 35-34)
Stadium: Heinz Field (60,050)
Tickets: 800-843-PITT
Site: Pittsburgh
Website: pittsburghpanthers.com
Twitter: @GoPittFootball

Coaching upheaval has been the norm in the Steel City in recent years, as new head coach Pat Narduzzi will be the Panthers' fourth this decade. Narduzzi, who was the defensive coordinator at Michigan State, will bring some much-needed toughness to a Pitt team that allowed 342 points or more in each of Paul Chryst's final two seasons on the job.

One of the areas Narduzzi identified for improvement was defensive aggressiveness. Because the secondary was so young last season, the Panthers rarely blitzed, and they ranked 105th in the FBS in sacks per game and only pressured the quarterback on 14.2 percent of passes.

If the defense can show signs of improvement, the Panthers could quickly rise in the muddled Coastal. Offensively, quarterback Chad Voytik and his top receiver, Tyler Boyd are back. Boyd caught 78 passes for 1,261 yards and eight touchdowns last season. The junior won't sneak up on anyone, though, so the development of junior wideout Dontez Ford will be key to Pitt's ability to spread the ball around.

Bruising running back James Conner is back after a sensational sophomore year in which he rushed for 1,765 yards and 26 touchdowns. He spearheaded a Pitt rushing attack that ranked 15th in the FBS.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

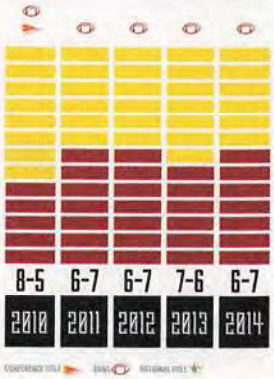
James Conner, RB

The 6-2, 250-pound mammoth of a running back is the most physically imposing ballcarrier in college football. Last season, his brutal running style helped him finish seventh in the country in rushing yards (1,765) and third in rushing touchdowns (26) en route to being named ACC Player of the Year. A word of advice for defenders who seek to tackle Conner head-on: Don't. He will truck you.

BOTTOM LINE

Pittsburgh has wallowed in mediocrity the last four seasons, finishing either 7-6 or 6-7 in each of those years. If the defense improves, the offense has the weapons to help Pitt make a move in the Coastal. The schedule is unbalanced and difficult. After opening with FCS Youngstown State, Pitt plays four of five on the road before finishing with four of five at home. Pitt gets Georgia Tech, Virginia Tech and Duke away from Heinz Field.

5-YEAR RECORD 33-32



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Chad Voytik (6-1, 205, Jr.)
RB	James Conner (6-2, 250, Jr.)
HB	Jaymar Parrish (6-2, 270, Jr.)
LT	Adam Bisnowaty (6-6, 305, Jr.)
LG	Dorian Johnson (6-5, 300, Jr.)
C	Artie Rowell (6-2, 315, Sr.)
RG	Alex Bookser (6-6, 295, So.)
RT	Jaryd Jones-Smith (6-7, 335, So.)
TE	J.P. Holtz (6-4, 245, Sr.)
WR	Tyler Boyd (6-2, 190, Jr.)
WR	Dontez Ford (6-2, 205, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Shakir Soto (6-3, 270, Jr.)
DT	Darryl Render (6-2, 275, Sr.)
NT	Khaynin Mosley-Smith (6-0, 310, Sr.)
DE	Rori Blair (6-4, 230, So.)
SLB	Nicholas Grigsby (6-1, 220, Sr.)
MLB	Matt Galambos (6-2, 245, Jr.)
WLB	Bam Bradley (6-2, 230, Jr.)
CB	Lafayette Pitts (5-11, 195, Sr.)
CB	Avonte Maddox (5-9, 165, So.)
FS	Terrish Webb (5-11, 180, Jr.)
SS	Reggie Mitchell (6-0, 185, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Chris Blewitt (5-9, 185, Jr.)
P	Ryan Winslow (6-5, 210, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1. **Jordan Whitehead,** CB ★★★★
2. **Darrin Hall,** RB ★★★★
3. **Anthony McKee,** LB ★★★

The first recruiting class under Pitt head coach Pat Narduzzi is delivering a cornerback in Jordan Whitehead that could add to the defensive guru's collection of first-round draft picks that he has coached. While Whitehead headlines the defense, Darrin Hall should help Pitt continue to implement a powerful rushing attack. Safety Jay Stocker and a late pickup at quarterback in Ben DiNucci powered what is a clear emphasis on in-state prospects moving forward.

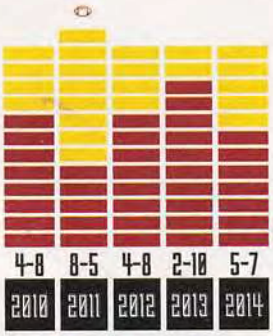
CONNER: KEITH SRAKOCIC / AP

VIRGINIA
CAVALIERS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **7**

Atlantic Coast – Coastal

5-YEAR RECORD 23-38



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Greyson Lambert (6-5, 220, Jr.)
TB Taquan Mizzell (5-10, 200, Jr.)
FB Connor Wingo-Reeves (6-3, 235, Jr.)
LT Michael Mooney (6-6, 290, Jr.)
LG Sean Karl (6-6, 305, Jr.)
C Jackson Matteo (6-5, 290, Jr.)
RG Ross Burbank (6-4, 300, Sr.)
RT Eric Smith (6-5, 305, Jr.)
TE Rob Burns (6-7, 260, Sr.)
WR Canaan Severin (6-2, 215, Sr.)
WR Andre Levrone (6-2, 210, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Mike Moore (6-4, 275, Sr.)
DT David Dean (6-1, 295, Sr.)
DT Donte Wilkins (6-2, 300, Jr.)
DE Trent Corney (6-3, 250, Sr.)
SLB Zach Bradshaw (6-3, 230, Jr.)
MLB Micah Kiser (6-2, 245, So.)
WLB C.J. Stalker (6-2, 225, Fr.)
CB Tim Harris (6-2, 200, Jr.)
CB Maurice Canady (6-2, 185, Sr.)
FS Quin Blanding (6-4, 215, So.)
SS Kelvin Rainey (6-1, 200, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Ian Frye (6-6, 215, Sr.)
P Nicholas Conte (6-3, 225, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1. **Jahvoni Simmons,** LB ★★★★
2. **C.J. Stalker,** LB ★★★
3. **Nick Johns,** QB ★★★

Mike London brought in the fewest number of in-state signees during his tenure but was able to get what could be some steals from outside the state borders, most notably with linebacker C.J. Stalker out of Ohio and 6-6 offensive tackle Grant Polk out of Florida. Inside the state of Virginia, super-productive linebacker Jahvoni Simmons leads the way and we think lineman RJ Proctor could be a sleeper.

Canaan Severin

The Mike London hot-seat watch was one of the more fascinating storylines in the ACC last year. The Cavaliers jumped out to a 4-2 start, which included a win over Louisville and tight losses to UCLA and BYU. At that point, the talk was more about which bowl the Cavaliers might be invited to, rather than London's job security.

Then the Cavaliers lost five of their last six games, including their 11th straight to rival Virginia Tech. Another season without a bowl bid renewed speculation that London would be dismissed. But UVa athletics director Craig Littlepage elected to keep London, who is signed through the 2016 season, rather than be responsible for a hefty buyout. Littlepage said London's team had shown enough progress from 2013 to 2014 to merit retention.

Littlepage has a point. Virginia was much more competitive last season, with five of its losses coming by eight points or fewer. Getting over the hump this year will be difficult, especially with so much to replace on defense. Top defensive end Eli Harold and linebacker Max Valles both declared for the NFL Draft.

The Cavaliers also must replace top tailback Kevin Parks, who ran for 745 yards and four touchdowns last year. London is hopeful that speedy junior Taquan Mizzell, whose nickname is "Smoke," is ready to take a step forward there. Virginia does have stability at quarterback for once, as Greyson Lambert is back after an up-and-down season in which he threw 10 TD passes and 11 interceptions. Matt Johns could push him for playing time if those numbers don't improve.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Canaan Severin, WR

The sports world went crazy over New York Giants receiver Odell Beckham's one-handed touchdown catch against the Dallas Cowboys last November. Overshadowed by the hysteria created by that now-famous reception was an equally difficult one-handed grab by Severin made a day earlier in a Virginia win over Miami. Severin dove for the ball, snagged it from a defender and went head-first into the end zone for a 23-yard score and one of his team-leading five TD receptions.

BOTTOM LINE

The nonconference schedule includes UCLA, Notre Dame and Boise State. With so many personnel question marks, it's hard to see the Cavaliers making much noise in the Coastal. Finishing .500 would be an accomplishment.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@UCLA	20-28
S.12	Notre Dame	
S.19	William & Mary	
S.25	Boise State	
O.10	@PITTSBURGH	24-19
O.17	Syracuse	
O.24	@NORTH CAROLINA	27-28
O.31	Georgia Tech	10-35
N.7	@MIAMI (FL)	30-13
N.14	@LOUISVILLE	23-21
N.21	Duke	13-20
N.28	Virginia Tech	20-24

COACH

Mike London
Sixth year (23-38)
Career record: 47-43

Offensive coordinator: Steve Fairchild (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Jon Tenuta (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 5-7
Stadium: Scott Stadium (61,500)
Tickets: 800-542-UVA1
Site: Charlottesville, Va.
Website: virginiasports.com
Twitter: @UVa_Football

SEVERIN: STEVE HELBER / AP

BIG

PROJECTED FINISH

East Division

1. **Ohio State**
   Bowl Projection: CFP Semifinals (Orange Bowl)
2. **Michigan State**
   Bowl Projection: Rose Bowl
3. **Michigan**
   Bowl Projection: Outback Bowl
4. **Penn State**
   Bowl Projection: TaxSlayer Bowl
5. **Maryland**
   Bowl Projection: Armed Forces Bowl
6. **Rutgers**
   Bowl Projection: Heart of Dallas Bowl
7. **Indiana**

West Division

1. **Wisconsin**
   Bowl Projection: Citrus Bowl
2. **Nebraska**
   Bowl Projection: Holiday Bowl
3. **Minnesota**
   Bowl Projection: Pinstripe Bowl
4. **Iowa**
   Bowl Projection: Foster Farms Bowl
5. **Northwestern**
   Bowl Projection: Quick Lane Bowl
6. **Illinois**
7. **Purdue**

Corey Clement, Wisconsin

Cardale Jones

All jokes are over. The Big Ten is back, right?

BY BILL BENDER | *Sporting News college football writer*

Ohio State put the Big Ten bashing to rest with a national championship run through the first College Football Playoff in 2014. The Buckeyes scored wins against Alabama and Oregon along the way to give the conference a sense of self-respect again.

Ohio State, which is 38-3 the last three seasons under Urban Meyer, figures to be right back in the national title hunt. The Buckeyes' biggest question is quarterback. Cardale Jones, J.T. Barrett and Braxton Miller are all capable of winning the Heisman Trophy and carrying Ohio State back to the playoffs. The three-way race is arguably the best quarterback battle in college football history.

So, does anybody have a chance at stopping Ohio State?

Michigan made the biggest offseason splash by hiring Jim Harbaugh away from the San Francisco 49ers. Harbaugh immediately raises the Wolverines' national profile, and it gives Meyer a worthy foil to re-ignite the rivalry with the Buckeyes, perhaps to the level of Woody Hayes vs. Bo Schembechler.

Michigan State might be the bigger hurdle for Ohio State, at least in 2015. Mark Dantonio has built a consistent winner in East Lansing, and Connor Cook is the most NFL-ready quarterback in the Big Ten. Penn State rounds out the top half of a suddenly loaded Big Ten East Division after finishing 7-6 in James Franklin's first season as coach. Rutgers and Maryland each enjoyed winning seasons in their first year in the Big Ten. Indiana and coach Kevin Wilson are in desperate need of a bowl bid.

The Big Ten West also had a few shakeups. Paul Chryst takes over at Wisconsin, and Mike Riley is the new coach at Nebraska. The Badgers have played in the Big Ten Championship Game three of the past four seasons, and they are still the favorite in the division. Minnesota, which finished 8-5 the last two seasons, could be the third wheel. Iowa's Kirk Ferentz, meanwhile, might be on the hot seat if the Hawkeyes don't have a show-me season. Illinois returns some experience, and Northwestern and Purdue are both two years removed from a bowl bid.

Conference depth is still questionable, but there's some punch at the top and things are trending in the right direction. The Buckeyes have shown they can lead the way. Can anybody else in the Big Ten follow?

JONES: DARRON CUMMINGS / AP; CLEMENT: MORRY GASH / AP; EZEKIEL: JAY LAPRETE / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Ohio State quarterbacks. Who starts for the Buckeyes? We likely won't know until the season opener at Virginia Tech, but it might not matter. Ohio State is good enough to repeat as national champs no matter who is under center.**

2015 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Steve Wiltfong, 247Sports

247 SPORTS COMPOSITE

RANK	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	POINTS
1	Ohio State	27	1	14	11	279.83
2	Penn State	25	0	13	12	250.00
3	Michigan State	21	0	5	16	221.80
4	Nebraska	20	0	3	16	204.86
5	Wisconsin	20	0	2	17	198.23
6	Michigan	14	0	6	8	194.86
7	Illinois	24	0	2	18	182.01
8	Maryland	18	0	2	15	181.67
9	Indiana	22	0	0	22	175.82
10	Northwestern	20	0	0	19	174.34
11	Rutgers	24	0	1	20	170.00
12	Iowa	21	0	1	19	168.52
13	Minnesota	24	0	0	24	165.56
14	Purdue	26	0	0	18	164.54

ALL-BIG TEN

OFFENSE

- **QB** **Cardale Jones,** Jr., Ohio State
- **RB** **Ezekiel Elliott,** Jr., Ohio State
- **RB** **Corey Clement,** Jr., Wisconsin
- **OL** **Jack Conklin,** Jr., Michigan State
- **OL** **Dan Voltz,** Jr., Wisconsin
- **OL** **Jack Allen,** Sr., Michigan State
- **OL** **Josh Campion,** Jr., Minnesota
- **OL** **Taylor Decker,** Sr., Ohio State
- **TE** **Jake Butt,** Jr., Michigan
- **WR** **DaeSean Hamilton,** So., Penn State
- **WR** **Leonte Carroo,** Sr., Rutgers

DEFENSE

- **DL** **Joey Bosa,** Jr., Ohio State
- **DL** **Adolphus Washington,** Sr., Ohio State
- **DL** **Maliek Collins,** Jr., Nebraska
- **DL** **Shilique Calhoun,** Sr., Michigan State
- **LB** **Mason Monheim,** Sr., Illinois
- **LB** **Darron Lee,** So., Ohio State
- **LB** **Ed Davis,** Sr., Michigan State
- **DB** **Briean Boddy-Calhoun,** Jr., Minnesota
- **DB** **William Likely,** Jr., Maryland
- **DB** **Michael Caputo,** Sr., Wisconsin
- **DB** **Vonn Bell,** Jr., Ohio State

SPECIALISTS

- **K** **Brad Craddock,** Sr., Maryland
- **P** **Peter Mortell,** Jr., Minnesota

PRESEASON MVP

This is admittedly a cop-out because whoever starts at quarterback for the Buckeyes will perhaps have the inside track on the Heisman Trophy. More than one quarterback could play, however, and Elliott was the most valuable player through Ohio State's national championship run. He'll be a constant source of production for the Buckeyes.

Ezekiel Elliott

OVERRATED

NORTHWESTERN

After a 10-win season in 2012, NU has just 10 wins the last two years combined. The Wildcats will always be a tough matchup under Pat Fitzgerald, but it's time for a breakthrough.

UNDERRATED

MINNESOTA

Jerry Kill has led the Gophers to back-to-back 8-win seasons, and that included wins against Iowa and Nebraska last season. Next mission? Beat Wisconsin and claim Paul Bunyan's Axe.

2 Jim Harbaugh. He's the most interesting storyline in college football for 2015. How quickly will he turn around Michigan? Will the first meeting against Ohio State mark the second coming of the "10-Year War?"

3 Best in the West? Wisconsin and Nebraska have first-year coaches. Is this the time Minnesota slips into the Big Ten Championship Game? The Gophers were close last season.

RATING THE BIG TEN

FASTEST RECEIVER
Dennis Norfleet, Michigan
We're still waiting for the senior to score his first career TD, however.

BEST HANDS
Mike Dudek, WR, Illinois
Surehanded sophomore caught 76 passes for 1,038 yards as a freshman.

BEST PASSING QB
Connor Cook, Michigan State
How good is Cook? He might have been taken ahead of Jameis Winston and Marcus Mariota in the NFL Draft had he opted to leave school early.

BEST RUNNING QB
Braxton Miller, Ohio State
It's easy to forget Miller had back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons in 2012-13.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Justin Jackson, Northwestern
Jackson has a lot of bounce, especially to the outside, and should build on an impressive freshman year.

BEST INSTINCTS
Ezekiel Elliott, RB, Ohio State
Elliott's string of 200-yard games against Wisconsin, Alabama and Oregon is the kind of thing that will never be forgotten in Columbus.

BEST ATHLETE
Tanner McEvoy, QB/SS, Wisconsin
The 6-6, 222-pounder easily could see time at both positions again in 2015.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED (OFF THE FIELD)
Adam DePietro, OG, Northwestern
DePietro made All-Academic Big Ten last year and is majoring in Learning and Organizational Change.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Connor Cook, QB, Michigan State
Cook took just 11 sacks last season. He's more mobile than you think outside the pocket.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Joey Bosa, DE, Ohio State
Bosa has 21 sacks in two seasons and will be a cornerstone defensive end—and perhaps the No. 1 pick—for an NFL franchise in 2016.

TOP IMPACT FROSH
Adam McLean, DL, Maryland
McLean is a four-star recruit who can play either defensive end or defensive tackle. He'll get reps right away for the Terps.

HARDEST HITTER
Darron Lee, LB, Ohio State
Lee's knack for making the big play stems from his timing for the big hit.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Mitch Leidner, QB, Minnesota
The former two-star recruit has developed into a consistent dual-threat quarterback for the Gophers.

BEST INTERVIEW
J.T. Barrett, QB, Ohio State
He's humble, honest and "all-in" on playing quarterback at Ohio State.

BEST COACH AS STRATEGIST
Jim Harbaugh, Michigan
Harbaugh's liberal usage of formations worked in the NFL. It's going to work again in college.

BEST COACH AS RECRUITER
Urban Meyer, Ohio State
Another top-five class is rolling into Columbus. Ohio State can get top guys from anywhere now.

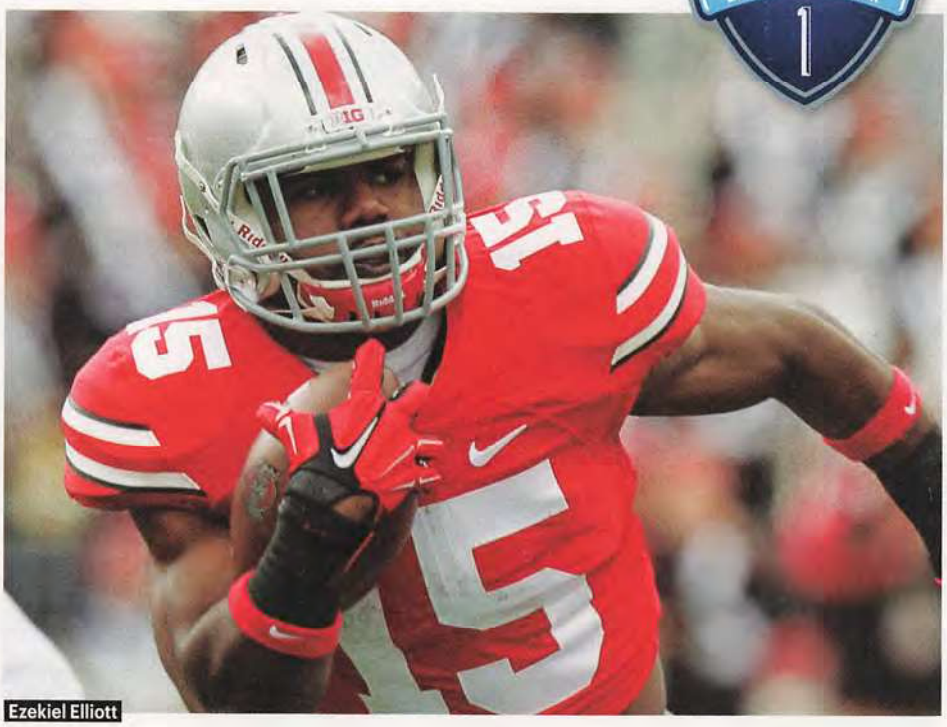
HOTTEST SEAT
Kirk Ferentz, Iowa
Ferentz shook up the coaching staff this offseason. That happens when you go 26-25 since 2011. Expectations are higher than that at Iowa.

BEST VENUE
Camp Randall Stadium, Wisconsin
The Badgers are 32-3 at home since 2010, and they didn't lose a home game last season. So get out of your seats and jump around.

OHIO STATE
BUCKEYES

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 1

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **1**


Ezekiel Elliott

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.7	@ VIRGINIA TECH	21-35
S.12	Hawaii	
S.19	Northern Illinois	
S.26	Western Michigan	
O.3	@ INDIANA	42-27
O.10	Maryland	52-24
O.17	Penn State	31-24
O.24	@ RUTGERS	56-17
N.7	Minnesota	31-24
N.14	@ ILLINOIS	55-14
N.21	Michigan State	49-37
N.28	@ MICHIGAN	42-28

COACH
Urban Meyer
Fourth year (38-3)
Career record: 142-26

Offensive coordinators:
Ed Warinner (fourth year) and Tim Beck (first year)
Defensive coordinators:
Luke Fickell (11th year) and Chris Ash (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 14-1
(Beat Oregon in the College Football Playoff Championship Game, 42-20)
Stadium: Ohio Stadium (104,944)
Tickets: 614-292-2624
Site: Columbus, Ohio
Website: ohiostatebuckeyes.com
Twitter: @OhioStAthletics

Urban Meyer delivered Ohio State its first national championship since 2002, and the scary part is it came a year early.

The Buckeyes are stacked again in 2015, especially at quarterback.

Get ready for the most intriguing quarterback battle in the history of college football. It's almost surreal to hash out the conversation.

Does Ohio State start Cardale Jones, who led the Buckeyes to a 59-0 win against Wisconsin in the Big Ten Championship Game before back-to-back wins against Alabama and Oregon in the first College Football Playoff? Jones turned down a shot at the NFL Draft to come back. Then there's J.T. Barrett, who set a Big Ten record with 45 total touchdowns last season. Oh, and don't forget about Braxton Miller, who is 28-8 as a starter. That includes a 21-2 record as a regular under Meyer. That's a question that likely won't be answered until September.

It might not matter. Ohio State's offense also runs through Ezekiel Elliott, who finished with 1,878 rushing yards and 18 TDs last year. He rushed for 696 yards and eight TDs–an incredible 9.2 yards per carry–in the wins against Wisconsin, Alabama and Oregon. Michael Thomas, Corey Smith and Johnnie Dixon make up another fast receiving corps, and Jalin Marshall and Dontre Wilson will also get touches.

The offensive line also returns first-team All-Big Ten selections Taylor Decker and Pat Elflein. Ed Warinner takes over at offensive coordinator for Tom Herman, who accepted the head-coaching job at Houston, but that shouldn't matter. How do you stop an offense that averages 42.8 points per game since Meyer's arrival in 2012?

The defense also showed improvement in 2014, and most of the key pieces are back. Defensive end Joey Bosa (13.5 sacks) is a candidate to be the No. 1 pick in the 2016 NFL

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Ezekiel Elliott, RB

Elliott was so good in Ohio State's championship run last year (he totaled 696 rushing yards and eight touchdowns in the Big Ten Championship Game, Sugar Bowl and CFP National Championship Game) that talking heads were debating whether he should sit out his junior year and prepare for the NFL Draft. The 6-0, 225-pound St. Louis product will be back, however, and could improve on his 1,878 rushing yards and 18 touchdowns of last season thanks to offseason surgery to repair a fractured left wrist. That problem kept him from carrying the ball with his left hand for much of the 2014 campaign.

ELLIOTT: JAY LAPRETE/AP

Draft. Adolphus Washington returned to school and can play either tackle or end.

Raekwon McMillan, Joshua Perry and Darron Lee make up the best group of linebackers in the Big Ten. Perry led the Buckeyes with 124 tackles, and Lee added 7.5 sacks, two interceptions and two fumble recoveries. The secondary loses cornerback Doran Grant but returns cornerback Eli Apple and safeties Tyvis Powell and Vonn Bell.

Kicker Sean Nuernberger and punter Cameron Johnston also return. There isn't a glaring weakness for the defending national champions.

BOTTOM LINE

Urban Meyer

Meyer figures to have the quarterback plan in place before the Labor Day opener at Virginia Tech. Remember, the Hokies beat the Buckeyes 35-21 at Ohio Stadium last season. It's anybody's guess who takes the first snap, but Ohio State's only other road game through mid-October is a trip to Indiana on Oct. 3.

The season kicks up a notch after the Halloween bye week. Ohio State has home games against Minnesota (Nov. 7) and Michigan State (Nov. 21) and closes the season at rival Michigan (Nov. 28), the first installment of the Meyer vs. Jim Harbaugh rivalry which is sure to generate hysteria in Ann Arbor and Columbus. Meyer is 3-0 against the Wolverines, but the last trip to Michigan Stadium ended in a 42-41 shootout.

The Buckeyes are 38-3 under Meyer, including a 24-0 record in regular-season Big Ten games. The lone loss to a conference team came in the 2013 Big Ten Championship Game against Michigan State. The road to the Big Ten championship goes through Columbus until somebody says otherwise.

Meyer has trademarked this season as "The Grind," and Ohio State will face the same pressures as any other defending national champion. Yet this team might be better equipped for another run toward the College Football Playoff and a national title defense. Expect the Buckeyes to be in the thick of the race all season, this time from the driver's seat.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Justin Hilliard, OLB ★★★★★
2. Jerome Baker, LB ★★★★
3. Torrance Gibson, QB ★★★★

For a fifth straight year, Ohio State finishes with the top recruiting class in the Big Ten, led by five-star outside linebacker Justin Hilliard, the top-ranked prospect in Ohio. Urban Meyer and his staff signed 27 in this recruiting cycle, including perhaps the top linebacker class in the country and arguably the top QB class between U.S. Army All-American Torrance Gibson and Ohio's Mr. Football, Top 247-ranked passer Joe Burrow. Nineteen players in this recruiting class ranked four stars or better, as the Buckeyes' haul finished No. 7 nationally. Eight players were Top 100 recruits by either 247Sports or the 247Sports Composite.

MEYER: BRANDON WADE / AP; MASCOT: ERIC GAY / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

J.T. Barrett	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	12	169.8	203-314-10	64.6	2834	34	236.2

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Ezekiel Elliott	15	273	1878	6.9	13	125.2

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Michael Thomas	15	54	799	14.8	9	53.3

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Joshua Perry	15	73	51	124

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Joey Bosa	15	13.5	96

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Vonn Bell	6	29	4.8	0

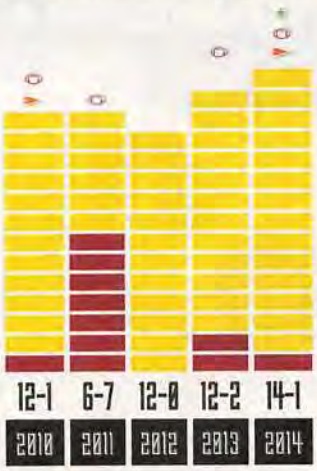
BEHIND THE MASK
Brutus Buckeye, named after the Buckeye tree, was introduced in 1965. His head resembles the nut of a Buckeye tree, and he dons a block "O" hat and scarlet and gray shirt with his name emblazoned across the chest.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	OHIO STATE	OPP
SCORING	672	330
Points Per Game	44.8	22.0
FIRST DOWNS	386	283
Rushing	217	120
Passing	150	135
Penalty	19	28
RUSHING YARDAGE	3967	2120
Yards gained rushing	4391	2585
Yards lost rushing	424	465
Rushing Attempts	690	537
Average Per Rush	5.7	3.9
Average Per Game	264.5	141.3
TDs Rushing	41	24
PASSING YARDAGE	3707	3016
Comp-Att-Int	260-409-12	276-495-25
Average Per Pass	9.1	6.1
Average Per Catch	14.3	10.9
Average Per Game	247.1	201.1
TDs Passing	42	17
TOTAL OFFENSE	7674	5136
Total Plays	1099	1032
Average Per Play	7.0	5.0
Average Per Game	511.6	342.4
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	39-886	70-1207
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	40-451	10-58
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	25-300	12-256
KICK RETURN AVG.	22.7	17.2
PUNT RETURN AVG.	11.3	5.8
INT RETURN AVG.	12.0	21.3
FUMBLES-LOST	24-14	19-8
PENALTIES-YARDS	84-711	79-686
Average Per Game	47.4	45.7
PUNTS-YARDS	48-2164	96-4078
Average Per Punt	45.1	42.5
Net punt average	41.8	36.9
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:30	28:30
3RD-DOWN CONV.	103/198	73/212
3rd-Down Pct.	52%	34%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	13/22	10/19
4th-Down Pct.	59%	53%
SACKS BY-YARDS	45-307	28-203
MISC YARDS	0	3
TDS SCORED	90	43
FG-ATTEMPTS	13-20	10-15
ATTENDANCE	744075	281884
Games/Avg Per Game	7/106296	4/70471
Neutral Site Games		4/69545

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Ohio State	182	172	156	148	14	672
Opponent	83	76	72	92	7	330

5-YEAR RECORD 56-11



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Cardale Jones (6-5, 250, Jr.)
	J.T. Barrett (6-2, 225, So.)
RB	Ezekiel Elliott (6-0, 225, Jr.)
	Curtis Samuel (5-11, 200, So.)
HB	Jalin Marshall (5-11, 205, So.)
	Dontre Wilson (5-10, 195, Jr.)
LT	Taylor Decker (6-8, 315, Sr.)
	Brady Taylor (6-5, 300, Fr.)
LG	Billy Price (6-4, 315, So.)
	Evan Lisle (6-7, 305, So.)
C	Jacoby Boren (6-2, 285, Sr.)
	Marcelys Jones (6-4, 315, So.)
RG	Pat Elflein (6-3, 300, Jr.)
	Demetrius Knox (6-4, 305, Fr.)
RT	Chase Farris (6-5, 310, Sr.)
	Jamarco Jones (6-5, 310, Fr.)
TE	Nick Vannett (6-6, 260, Sr.)
	Marcus Baugh (6-5, 255, So.)
WR	Michael Thomas (6-3, 210, Jr.)
	James Clark (5-10, 185, So.)
WR	Johnnie Dixon (5-11, 194, Fr.)
	Corey Smith (6-1, 195, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Joey Bosa (6-6, 275, Jr.)
	Tyquan Lewis (6-4, 260, So.)
DT	Adolphus Washington (6-4, 290, Sr.)
	Donovan Munger (6-4, 300, So.)
DT	Michael Hill (6-3, 295, So.)
	Tommy Schutt (6-3, 290, Sr.)
DE	Jalyn Holmes (6-4, 265, So.)
	Sam Hubbard (6-5, 265, Fr.)
OLB	Raekwon McMillan (6-2, 240, So.)
	Camren Williams (6-1, 225, Sr.)
MLB	Joshua Perry (6-4, 254, Sr.)
	Dante Booker (6-3, 233, So.)
OLB	Darron Lee (6-2, 228, So.)
	Chris Worley (6-2, 225, So.)
CB	Eli Apple (6-1, 200, So.)
	Marshon Lattimore (6-0, 195, Fr.)
CB	Gareon Conley (6-0, 195, So.)
	Damon Webb (5-11, 193, So.)
FS	Vonn Bell (5-11, 205, Jr.)
	Cam Burrows (6-0, 208, Jr.)
SS	Tyvis Powell (6-3, 210, Jr.)
	Erick Smith (6-0, 202, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Sean Nuernberger (6-1, 220, So.)
P	Cameron Johnston (5-11, 195, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

MICHIGAN STATE
SPARTANS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 8

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 2

Connor Cook

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	@ WESTERN MICHIGAN	
S.12	Oregon	27-46
S.19	Air Force	
S.26	Central Michigan	
O.3	Purdue	45-31
O.10	@ RUTGERS	45-3
O.17	@ MICHIGAN	35-11
O.24	Indiana	56-17
N.7	@ NEBRASKA	27-22
N.14	Maryland	37-15
N.21	@ OHIO STATE	37-49
N.28	Penn State	34-10

COACH
Mark Dantonio
Ninth year (75-31)
Career record: 93-48

Offensive coordinators: Jim Bollman (third year) and Dave Warner (third year)
Defensive coordinators: Harlon Barnett (first year) and Mike Tressel (first year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 11-2
(Beat Baylor in the Cotton Bowl, 42-41)
Stadium: Spartan Stadium (75,005)
Tickets: 800-GO-STATE
Site: East Lansing, Mich.
Website: msuspartans.com
Twitter: @MSU_Football

Michigan State isn't going away anytime soon, not as long as Mark Dantonio is coaching in East Lansing.

Dantonio has built the most underappreciated program in the country. The Spartans have won at least 11 games four of the last five seasons. Ohio State, Alabama, Oregon and Stanford are the only other programs that can say that. Michigan State has won four consecutive bowl games against schools such as Georgia, TCU, Stanford and Baylor. The Spartans capped last season with a 21-point fourth-quarter comeback win against the Bears in the Cotton Bowl.

This is a College Football Playoff contender built around Connor Cook, who could be the first quarterback taken in the 2016 NFL Draft. Cook's calling card is efficient, mistake-free play, and he has compiled 46 touchdowns and just 14 interceptions the last two seasons. He should be able to build on that with another successful season.

The Spartans have a few off-the-field problems to deal with. Running back Delton Williams and receiver Macgarrett Kings were both arrested in the offseason, and they were expected to step in for departed playmakers Jeremy Langford (1,565 rushing yards, 22 TDs) and Tony Lippett (1,198 receiving yards, 11 TDs), respectively. Gerald Holmes might get the first crack at tailback if Williams can't work his way back to the field. R.J. Shelton and Aaron Burbridge must be more consistent receivers. Tight end Josiah Price will be more involved in the passing game.

The good news is it might not matter. Michigan State's offensive line is a real strong point. Tackle Jack Conklin opted to stay in school despite first-round draft projections, and first-team All-Big Ten center Jack Allen returns. That should help ease the transition at tailback.

The Spartans' defense also will have to adjust without defensive coordinator Pat Narduzzi, who took the head-coaching job at Pittsburgh. Harlon Barnett and Mike Tressel will share defensive coordinator duties, and Michigan State figures to be the same aggressive defense that relies on man coverage.

The Spartans have allowed just 18.3 points per game since 2010. The only schools that

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Connor Cook, QB

Cook, who was impressively efficient all of last season with 24 touchdowns to just eight interceptions, saved his best performance for last against Baylor in the Cotton Bowl. The 6-4 signal-caller threw for 314 yards, the fourth most in the bowl's history, and had 24 completions, second most in MSU postseason history. In the fourth quarter Cook completed nine passes for 179 yards and two touchdowns to give the Spartans a 42-41 come-from-behind win. The aerial attack is in good hands for another year in East Lansing.

COOK: JAE C. HONG / AP

are better are Alabama, LSU and Florida State. Shilique Calhoun, who led the team with eight sacks, bypassed the NFL Draft. Linebacker Ed Davis had 58 tackles and seven sacks, and Darian Hicks and RJ Williamson anchor a nasty secondary. Michigan State's defense will continue to be a strength.

BOTTOM LINE

Mark Dantonio

Michigan State gets a chance for revenge at home against Oregon on Sept. 12. The Spartans led the Ducks at halftime before getting outscored 28-3 in the second half of a 46-27 loss at Autzen Stadium last season. A win there would put the Spartans in the top five in most polls.

The pivotal game comes on Oct. 17 at Michigan. Dantonio has built this program around beating the Wolverines, and Michigan State has won six of the last seven meetings. Jim Harbaugh raises the stakes in this rivalry, and Dantonio is sure to use that as motivation for a team that thrives with a chip on its shoulder.

Road games at Nebraska (Nov. 7) and Ohio State (Nov. 21) also loom. Michigan State has won the last two against the Cornhuskers, and the Spartans are the only Big Ten team to beat Urban Meyer-led Ohio State the last three seasons. The Buckeyes beat the Spartans 49-37 in East Lansing last year in a game that was close for three quarters. That game should decide who represents the Big Ten East in Indianapolis.

How Michigan State adjusts without Narduzzi and who steps up at running back and wide receiver are the deciding factors. Otherwise, expect the same tough-to-beat style in East Lansing.

The Spartans have enough to make a run to the College Football Playoff, especially if they score wins against Oregon, Michigan and Ohio State. Expect Michigan State to contend for a New Year's Day bowl no matter what.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

The Spartans success on the field has resulted in a Top 25 recruiting class for a second straight year, a 21-player haul that finished No. 3 in the Big Ten. While the top-two rated players in the class will line up on offense, led by Top 100 running back Larry Scott, who chose the Spartans over Ohio State, coach Mark Dantonio and company continued to load up on defense with this group. Michigan State added size, speed and athleticism across the board on the defensive line, at linebacker and in the secondary. Top247 receiver Felton Davis III was a big get at a position of need as Michigan State loses five receivers next year.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Larry Scott, RB ★★★★
2. Kyonta Stallworth, OL ★★★★
3. Raequan Williams, OL ★★★★

DONTONIO, BRANDON WADE / AP; MASCOT: AL MAST / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Connor Cook	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	13	149.4	212-365-8	58.1	3214	24	247.2

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Delton Williams	13	54	316	5.9	5	24.3

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Macgarrett Kings Jr.	13	29	404	13.9	1	31.1
Aaron Burbridge	13	29	358	12.3	1	27.5

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
RJ Williamson	13	34	25	59

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Shilique Calhoun	13	8.0	91

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
RJ Williamson	3	60	20.0	2
Trae Waynes	3	0	0.0	0

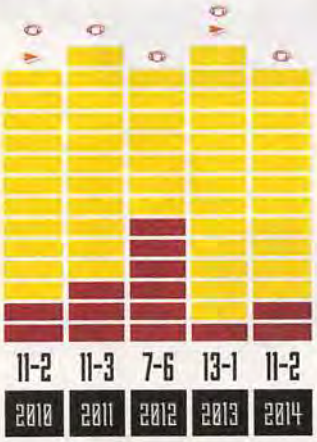
BEHIND THE MASK
Sparty was introduced to Michigan State fans during the 1989 football season and represents an ancient Spartan warrior—even though he wears an Imperial-style Roman legionary's helmet.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	MICH. ST	OPP
SCORING	559	280
Points Per Game	43.0	21.5
FIRST DOWNS	321	199
Rushing	153	67
Passing	154	112
Penalty	14	20
RUSHING YARDAGE	3057	1150
Yards gained rushing	3274	1578
Yards lost rushing	217	428
Rushing Attempts	594	363
Average Per Rush	5.1	3.2
Average Per Game	235.2	88.5
TDs Rushing	44	18
PASSING YARDAGE	3453	2955
Comp-Att-Int	236-400-9	234-444-18
Average Per Pass	8.6	6.7
Average Per Catch	14.6	12.6
Average Per Game	265.6	227.3
TDs Passing	26	17
TOTAL OFFENSE	6510	4105
Total Plays	994	807
Average Per Play	6.5	5.1
Average Per Game	500.8	315.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	36-865	51-1144
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	22-127	18-190
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	18-128	9-128
KICK RETURN AVG.	24.0	22.4
PUNT RETURN AVG.	5.8	10.6
INT RETURN AVG.	7.1	14.2
FUMBLES-LOST	13-6	22-16
PENALTIES-YARDS	80-754	73-581
Average Per Game	58.0	44.7
PUNTS-YARDS	52-2143	77-3094
Average Per Punt	41.2	40.2
Net punt average	35.6	37.8
TIME OF POSS./GAME	35:21	24:39
3RD-DOWN CONV.	97/194	57/182
3rd-Down Pct.	50%	31%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	9/17	10/21
4th-Down Pct.	53%	48%
SACKS BY-YARDS	42-308	11-53
MISC YARDS	76	0
TDS SCORED	74	36
FG-ATTEMPTS	14-22	9-15
ATTENDANCE	522765	295780
Games/Avg Per Game	7/74681	5/59156
Neutral Site Games		1/71464

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Michigan State	166	169	103	121	0	559
Opponent	42	89	65	84	0	280

5-YEAR RECORD 53-14



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Connor Cook (6-4, 220, Sr.)
	Tyler O'Connor (6-3, 222, Jr.)
FB	Trevon Pendleton (6-0, 250, Sr.)
	David Fennel (6-2, 305, Sr.)
RB	Gerald Holmes (6-0, 218, So.)
	Delton Williams (6-1, 228, Jr.)
LT	Jack Conklin (6-6, 317, Jr.)
	Dennis Finley (6-6, 305, So.)
LG	Benny McGowan (6-3, 316, Jr.)
	Chase Gianacakos (6-6, 300, Fr.)
C	Jack Allen (6-2, 295, Sr.)
	Brian Allen (6-2, 306, So.)
RG	Donavon Clark (6-4, 317, Sr.)
	Brandon Clemons (6-3, 305, Sr.)
RT	Kodi Kieler (6-6, 310, Jr.)
	Miguel Machado (6-6, 300, Jr.)
TE	Josiah Price (6-4, 250, Jr.)
	Jamal Lyles (6-3, 260, Jr.)
WR	R.J. Shelton (5-11, 200, Jr.)
	Aaron Burbridge (6-1, 208, Sr.)
WR	Macgarrett Kings Jr. (5-10, 186, Sr.)
	AJ Troup (6-2, 218, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Shilique Calhoun (6-5, 250, Sr.)
	Montez Sweat (6-6, 239, Fr.)
NT	Joel Heath (6-6, 296, Sr.)
	Lawrence Thomas (6-4, 300, Sr.)
DT	Damon Knox (6-5, 280, Sr.)
	Malik McDowell (6-6, 285, So.)
DE	Demetrius Cooper (6-5, 245, So.)
	Evan Jones (6-5, 252, Jr.)
OLB	Ed Davis (6-3, 233, Sr.)
	Shane Jones (6-1, 228, So.)
MLB	Darien Harris (6-0, 220, Sr.)
	Chris Frey (6-2, 226, So.)
OLB	Riley Bullough (6-2, 230, Jr.)
	Jon Reschke (6-2, 230, So.)
CB	Darian Hicks (5-10, 178, Jr.)
	Arjen Colquhoun (6-1, 197, Sr.)
CB	Jermaine Edmondson (6-0, 181, Jr.)
	Vayante Copeland (6-0, 200, Fr.)
FS	RJ Williamson (6-0, 214, Sr.)
	Montae Nicholson (6-2, 216, So.)
SS	Demetrious Cox (6-1, 200, Jr.)
	Mark Meyers (6-0, 185, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Michael Geiger (5-8, 188, Jr.)
P	Jake Hartberger (6-4, 205, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

MICHIGAN
WOLVERINES

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

3

Derrick Green

It has taken seven years and three coaching changes, but Michigan finally has its man. Jim Harbaugh replaced Brady Hoke, who was fired after the Wolverines bottomed out at 5-7 in 2014.

Hiring Harbaugh, a Michigan icon who played quarterback for the legendary Bo Schembechler, erased those bad memories. He's a rock-star coach. Harbaugh took Stanford to the Orange Bowl in 2009-10 and led the San Francisco 49ers to three straight NFC Championship games and a Super Bowl appearance from 2011-13. He's the perfect fit for a program with forever-unrealistic expectations.

How quickly will the resurrection of one of college football's biggest brands happen?

Harbaugh needs to find the right quarterback, and it's a wide-open competition. Shane Morris took the lead in the spring, but he'll be challenged by Iowa transfer Jake Rudock and true freshman Alex Malzone. Two other freshmen, redshirt Wilton Speight and true frosh Zach Gentry, will also be in the mix.

New offensive coordinator Tim Drevno figures to lean on the running back trio of Derrick Green, De'Veon Smith and Ty Isaac, a transfer from USC. Green averaged 5.7 yards per carry through six games last year before suffering a season-ending collarbone injury. Tight end Jake Butt has All-Big Ten potential, but receivers Amara Darboh and Jehu Chesson need to develop more consistency.

The offensive line is full of former four-star recruits, but tackle Mason Cole is the only one who has played up to potential. Center is a question mark after Jack Miller opted not to play his senior season, and guard Graham Glasgow violated probation in the spring and was briefly suspended. It's time for juniors Kyle Kalis and Erik Magnuson to step up.

Harbaugh tabbed D.J. Durkin, who served as defensive coordinator at Florida the last two seasons, to run the defense. He also retained Greg Mattison to coach the defensive line. Michigan ranked third in the Big Ten in total defense last season, giving up 311.3 yards per game.

Is there a game-wrecker on this unit? Defensive ends Taco Charlton and Mario Ojemudia combined for seven sacks in 2014. Willie Henry played well in spots at tackle.

Desmond Morgan, James Ross and Joe

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	@UTAH	10-26
S.12	Oregon State	
S.19	UNLV	
S.26	BYU	
O.3	@MARYLAND	16-23
O.10	Northwestern	10-9
O.17	Michigan State	11-35
O.31	@MINNESOTA	14-30
N.7	Rutgers	24-26
N.14	@INDIANA	34-10
N.21	@PENN STATE	18-13
N.28	Ohio State	28-42

COACH

Jim Harbaugh
First year
Career record: 58-27
Offensive coordinator: Tim Drevno (first year)
Defensive coordinator: D.J. Durkin (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 5-7
Stadium: Michigan Stadium (109,901)
Tickets: 866-296-MTIX
Site: Ann Arbor, Mich.
Website: mgoblue.com
Twitter: @umichfootball

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Derrick Green, RB

The 5-11, 234-pound Green lost 20 pounds before the start of last season and picked up some speed that was showcased by a 170-yard rushing performance in the season opener. He started the Wolverines' first six games before going down in early October with a broken clavicle, but at the time of his injury he was fifth in the Big Ten in rushing with 471 yards despite splitting carries with backup De'Veon Smith and former QB Devin Gardner.

GREEN: RICH SCHULTZ/AP

Bolden anchor an experienced group of linebackers. Blake Countess is a solid cornerback. The X-factor is sophomore Jabrill Peppers, who missed most of last season with a knee injury. Peppers is a dynamic talent who might switch from cornerback to safety. He has to be a difference-maker for a unit that forced just 10 turnovers last season.

BOTTOM LINE

Harbaugh's first year in Ann Arbor is one of the most interesting storylines in college football for 2015. The Thursday night opener at Utah on Sept. 3 could be the most watched Thursday night opener in college football history. Michigan also plays BYU on Sept. 26.

Michigan opens Big Ten play at Maryland (Oct. 3), and a late-season trip to Penn State (Nov. 21) is a landmine.

But, in the final analysis, Harbaugh was brought in to tip the scales back in two rivalry games. Michigan is just 2-12 against Michigan State and Ohio State since former coach Lloyd Carr retired in 2007.

The Spartans visit Michigan Stadium on Oct. 17. Michigan State is 6-2 against the Wolverines under Mark Dantonio and has won the last two meetings by a combined score of 64-17.

The season-finale against defending national champion Ohio State (Nov. 28) might be the most sought-after ticket of the season. The matchup between Harbaugh and Urban Meyer already has a "10-Year War" feel to it, and Ann Arbor will be rocking no matter what the Wolverines' record is.

Michigan is the wild card in the Big Ten East race. It's ambitious to expect a division championship, and eight or nine wins is a more reasonable request. The Wolverines are a longshot for anything more than that–at least until Harbaugh finds a quarterback he can trust.

Jim Harbaugh

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

New Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh and his staff came in at the end and finished strong on what was always going to be a small class to begin with. The Wolverines signed 14 players, eight of whom ranked four stars or better. The Wolverines got a little bit of everything in this class, landing potential difference-makers at every position group with the exception of linebacker. Brian Cole is an early-impact guy as a slot receiver, Tyrone Wheatley Jr. should be able to make a first-year impact at tight end and defensive end Shelton Johnson was a nice Signing Day snag as the Wolverines lured him away from his home state and longtime favorite Florida State.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Brian Cole, ATH/WR ★★★★
2. Zach Gentry, QB ★★★★
3. Tyree Kinnel, S ★★★★

HARBAUGH: TONY DING / AP; MASCOT: THINKSTOCK / GETTY IMAGES

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Shane Morris	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	5	46.9	14-40-3	35.0	128	0	25.6

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
De'Veon Smith	12	108	519	4.8	6	43.2

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Amara Darboh	12	36	473	13.1	2	39.4

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Joe Bolden	12	55	47	102

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Taco Charlton	12	3.5	33
Mario Ojemudia	12	3.5	24

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Jourdan Lewis	2	4	2.0	0

BEHIND THE MASCOT

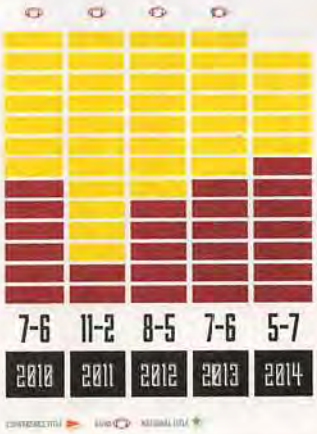
Michigan, which doesn't have a live or costumed mascot, began referring to itself as the Wolverines in 1861. The last live mascots, **Biff and Bennie**, lasted for just the 1927 season before both getting moved to different zoos in the area.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	MICHIGAN	OPP
SCORING	251	269
Points Per Game	20.9	22.4
FIRST DOWNS	222	199
Rushing	101	88
Passing	104	101
Penalty	17	10
RUSHING YARDAGE	1954	1412
Yards gained rushing	2254	1780
Yards lost rushing	300	368
Rushing Attempts	425	440
Average Per Rush	4.6	3.2
Average Per Game	162.8	117.7
TDs Rushing	17	13
PASSING YARDAGE	2042	2324
Comp-Att-Int	189-326-18	205-343-5
Average Per Pass	6.3	6.8
Average Per Catch	10.8	11.3
Average Per Game	170.2	193.7
TDs Passing	10	14
TOTAL OFFENSE	3996	3736
Total Plays	751	783
Average Per Play	5.3	4.8
Average Per Game	333.0	311.3
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	23-457	29-620
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	13-88	20-266
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	5-13	18-322
KICK RETURN AVG.	19.9	21.4
PUNT RETURN AVG.	6.8	13.3
INT RETURN AVG.	2.6	17.9
FUMBLES-LOST	15-8	9-5
PENALTIES-YARDS	42-381	72-589
Average Per Game	31.8	49.1
PUNTS-YARDS	54-2318	65-2528
Average Per Punt	42.9	38.9
Net punt average	34.3	36.3
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:52	29:08
3RD-DOWN CONV.	61/155	68/178
3rd-Down Pct.	39%	38%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	5/13	5/16
4th-Down Pct.	38%	31%
SACKS BY-YARDS	29-248	25-171
MISC YARDS	-7	17
TDS SCORED	29	31
FG-ATTEMPTS	15-21	18-22
ATTENDANCE	734364	361492
Games/Avg Per Game	7/104909	5/72298
Neutral Site Games		0/0

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Michigan	57	82	52	60	0	251
Opponent	36	87	69	77	0	269

5-YEAR RECORD 38-26



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Shane Morris (6-3, 209, Jr.)
	Wilton Speight (6-6, 235, Fr.)
FB	Joe Kerridge (6-0, 249, Sr.)
	Sione Houma (6-0, 243, Sr.)
RB	Derrick Green (5-11, 234, Jr.)
	De'Veon Smith (5-11, 223, Jr.)
LT	Mason Cole (6-5, 287, So.)
	Juwann Bushell-Beatty (6-6, 319, So.)
LG	Ben Braden (6-6, 331, Jr.)
	Blake Bars (6-5, 281, Sr.)
C	Graham Glasgow (6-6, 303, Sr.)
	Patrick Kugler (6-5, 297, So.)
RG	Kyle Kalis (6-5, 292, Jr.)
	David Dawson (6-4, 309, Jr.)
RT	Erik Magnuson (6-6, 295, Jr.)
	Logan Tuley-Tillman (6-7, 309, So.)
TE	Jake Butt (6-6, 248, Jr.)
	A.J. Williams (6-6, 285, Sr.)
WR	Amara Darboh (6-2, 216, Jr.)
	Freddy Canteen (6-1, 185, So.)
WR	Jehu Chesson (6-3, 207, Jr.)
	Dennis Norfleet (5-7, 168, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Taco Charlton (6-6, 273, Jr.)
	Chris Wormley (6-4, 300, Jr.)
DT	Willie Henry (6-2, 311, Jr.)
	Ondre Pipkins (6-3, 317, Sr.)
NT	Ryan Glasgow (6-4, 297, Jr.)
	Bryan Mone (6-4, 325, So.)
DE	Mario Ojemudia (6-3, 252, Sr.)
	Matthew Godin (6-6, 287, Sr.)
OLB	James Ross (6-1, 232, Sr.)
	Royce Jenkins-Stone (6-2, 240, Sr.)
MLB	Desmond Morgan (6-1, 236, Sr.)
	Ben Gedeon (6-3, 241, Jr.)
OLB	Joe Bolden (6-3, 232, Sr.)
	Mike McCray (6-4, 242, Jr.)
CB	Blake Countess (5-10, 185, Sr.)
	Channing Stribling (6-2, 178, Jr.)
CB	Jourdan Lewis (5-10, 176, Jr.)
	Terry Richardson (5-9, 174, Sr.)
FS	Jabrill Peppers (6-1, 205, So.)
	Jarrod Wilson (6-2, 210, Sr.)
SS	Dymonte Thomas (6-2, 191, Jr.)
	Delano Hill (6-0, 204, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Kenny Allen (6-3, 230, Jr.)
P	Andrew David (5-8, 170, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

PENN STATE

NITTANY LIONS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **4**

DaeSean Hamilton

For the first time in four years, Penn State enters a football season without NCAA sanctions hanging over the program.

The NCAA lifted the school's postseason ban midway through last season, and coach James Franklin parlayed that into a 7-6 campaign that culminated in a 31-30 win against Boston College in the Pinstripe Bowl. Somehow, the Nittany Lions have managed a winning season each of the last three years since Joe Paterno resigned.

Penn State, however, hasn't competed for a Big Ten championship. In order to do that, they must protect junior quarterback Christian Hackenberg, a two-year starter who struggled last season after taking 44 sacks. Give Hackenberg time, and the Nittany Lions have a potential first-round talent at quarterback. If not, the same inconsistency will continue.

Penn State's leading rusher returns in Akeel Lynch, and sophomore receiver DaeSean Hamilton totaled 82 receptions and 899 yards last season. Hamilton has the look of an All-Big Ten selection. Geno Lewis is another weapon in the receiving game, and Kyle Carter replaces tight end Jesse James, who left early for the NFL.

Deion Barnes also opted for the draft, and Penn State has holes at defensive end as a result. Senior tackle Anthony Zettel led the Nittany Lions in tackles for loss (17.5) and tied for the team lead in interceptions with three. Linebacker Nyeem Wartman had 75 tackles, and the secondary returns senior cornerbacks Trevor Williams and Jordan Lucas.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

DaeSean Hamilton, WR

Quarterback Christian Hackenberg completed 270 passes for 2,977 yards last season. Nearly one-third of both totals went to freshman receiver Hamilton (82 receptions, 899 receiving yards). Hamilton's reception total ranks him in the top 20 in Penn State history for career receptions. A duplicate sophomore season would rank him in the top five. Suffice it to say, some receiving records may be in trouble at State College this year.

BOTTOM LINE

There's optimism in Happy Valley, but keep in mind Penn State finished 2-6 in the Big Ten last season. That included embarrassing losses to Illinois and Maryland. The Nittany Lions' early-season schedule is favorable to the point they could be 6-0 when they visit Ohio State on Oct. 17. Penn State closes the season with a home game against Michigan (Nov. 21) before a trip to Michigan State (Nov. 28).

In order to compete with that kind of company, Hackenberg will need more protection. Penn State also must avoid the inexcusable slip-up this time around. A nine-win season isn't out of the question, and the trip to Columbus will tell you whether or not this program is ready to get back on the national stage.

Big Ten - East

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@TEMPLE	30-13
S.12	Buffalo	
S.19	Rutgers	13-10
S.26	San Diego State	
O.3	Army	
O.10	Indiana	13-7
O.17	@OHIO STATE	24-31
O.24	Maryland (at Baltimore, MD)	19-20
O.31	Illinois	14-16
N.7	@NORTHWESTERN	6-29
N.21	Michigan	13-18
N.28	@MICHIGAN STATE	10-34

COACH

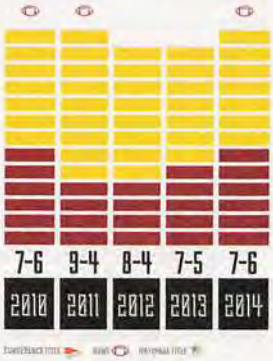
James Franklin
Second year (7-6)
Career record: 31-21

Offensive coordinator: John Donovan (second year)
Defensive coordinators: Bob Shoop (second year) and Brent Pry (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat Boston College in the Pinstripe Bowl, 31-30)
Stadium: Beaver Stadium (106,572)
Tickets: 800-NITTANY
Site: State College, Pa.
Website: gopsusports.com
Twitter: @PennStateFball

5-YEAR RECORD 38-25



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Christian Hackenberg (6-4, 236, Jr.)
RB	Akeel Lynch (6-0, 220, Jr.)
LT	Donovan Smith (6-5, 335, Sr.)
LG	Brendan Mahon (6-4, 316, So.)
C	Angelo Mangiro (6-3, 315, Sr.)
RG	Brian Gaia (6-3, 301, Jr.)
RT	Andrew Nelson (6-5, 310, So.)
TE	Kyle Carter (6-3, 240, Sr.)
WR	Geno Lewis (6-1, 206, Jr.)
WR	DaeSean Hamilton (6-1, 211, So.)
WR	Matt Zanellato (6-3, 211, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Carl Nassib (6-6, 270, Sr.)
DT	Austin Johnson (6-4, 325, Jr.)
DT	Anthony Zettel (6-4, 278, Sr.)
DE	Garrett Sickels (6-4, 262, So.)
OLB	Nyeem Wartman (6-1, 243, Jr.)
MLB	Brandon Bell (6-1, 231, Jr.)
OLB	Gary Wooten (6-2, 239, Jr.)
CB	Trevor Williams (6-1, 196, Sr.)
CB	Jordan Lucas (6-0, 199, Sr.)
S	Malik Golden (6-1, 205, Jr.)
S	Marcus Allen (6-2, 206, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Chris Gulla (6-0, 202, So.)
P	Chris Gulla (6-0, 202, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

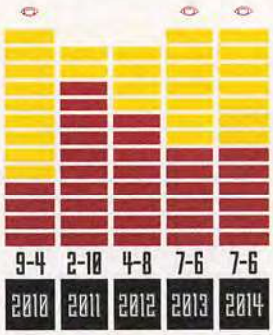
1. **Paris Palmer,** OT ★★★★
2. **Saquon Barkley,** RB ★★★★
3. **Garrett Taylor,** CB ★★★★

No more scholarship restrictions for Penn State, now it's about building the roster back up to 85. James Franklin and his staff took a full boat, 25, a class that ranked No. 2 in the Big Ten and 14th nationally. Penn State dominated in-state recruiting and also landed several difference-makers out of New Jersey and the D.C./Maryland/Virginia area. Sixteen four-star recruits signed, none bigger than juco offensive tackle Paris Palmer, who could walk right in and start at left tackle.

HAMILTON: GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

MARYLAND TERRAPINS

5-YEAR RECORD 29-34



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

- **QB** Caleb Rowe (6-3, 215, Sr.)
- **RB** Brandon Ross (5-10, 205, Sr.)
- **LT** Damian Prince (6-3, 325, Fr.)
- **LG** Michael Dunn (6-5, 306, Jr.)
- **C** Evan Mulrooney (6-4, 299, Sr.)
- **RG** Andrew Zeller (6-5, 315, Sr.)
- **RT** Derwin Gray (6-5, 315, Fr.)
- **TE** Andrew Isaacs (6-2, 240, Jr.)
- **WR** Levern Jacobs (5-11, 185, Sr.)
- **WR** Taivon Jacobs (5-10, 165, So.)
- **WR** Marcus Leak (6-0, 214, Sr.)

DEFENSE

- **DE** Quinton Jefferson (6-3, 287, Sr.)
- **DT** David Shaw (6-4, 308, So.)
- **DT** Roman Braglio (6-3, 267, Jr.)
- **DE** Yannick Ngakoue (6-2, 250, Jr.)
- **OLB** Cavon Walker (6-2, 254, Jr.)
- **MLB** Jermaine Carter Jr. (6-0, 240, So.)
- **OLB** Abner Logan (6-1, 240, Jr.)
- **CB** William Likely (5-7, 175, Jr.)
- **CB** Alvin Hill (6-0, 200, Sr.)
- **FS** Sean Davis (6-1, 200, Sr.)
- **SS** Anthony Nixon (6-0, 205, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

- **K** Brad Craddock (6-0, 189, Sr.)
- **P** Lee Shrader (6-2, 224, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Adam McLean,** DT ★★★★
2. **Quarvez Boulware,** OL ★★★★
3. **D.J. Moore,** WR ★★★

Randy Edsall and his staff are bringing in the nation's No. 48-ranked class, good for No. 8 in the Big Ten. The Terrapins continue to build depth up front, bringing in one of the conference's top offensive-line classes led by Quarvez Boulware. Maryland also wanted to add some speed and playmaking ability on offense with some of the talent they're losing and receiver D.J. Moore has a chance to be an instant impact guy.

Yannick Ngakoue

NGAKOUE: PATRICK SEMANSKY / AP

Maryland made the transition from the ACC to the Big Ten in coach Randy Edsall's fourth season in College Park, and the results were better than expected. The Terrapins matched their 7-6 record and improved by one game in conference play before losing to Stanford in the Foster Farms Bowl.

Despite a few highlights–including wins at Penn State and Michigan–Maryland couldn't string together back-to-back wins in conference play.

The Terps face challenges in 2015 with breaking in a new starting quarterback, Caleb Rowe, who saw action in four games last season. Maryland also lost leading rusher C.J. Brown, and wide receiver Stefon Diggs left early for the NFL Draft. Senior Brandon Ross fills in at tailback, while senior Levern Jacobs and his younger brother, Taivon, are expected to bolster the receiving corps along with Marcus Leak.

The offensive line is also green, but tackles Damian Prince and Derwin Gray were highly recruited and could develop into All-Big Ten players down the road.

The overhaul is coming on defense, where the Terps shift from a 3-4 to a 4-3 under new defensive coordinator Keith Dudzinski, who served as the Terps' linebackers coach the last four seasons. Maryland allowed 30.2 points per game last season, and that included 201.9 yards on the ground. Cornerback William Likely led the Big Ten in interceptions with six last season, however, so there's at least one playmaker.

The Terps have a special-teams advantage in Groza Award winner Brad Craddock, who hit 18 of 19 field-goal attempts last season, including 11 of 12 from 40 yards or more. Likely doubles as the best return man in the conference.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Yannick Ngakoue, DE

Teammates and coaches praised Ngakoue last year for the commitment he made in the weight room and in film study–and that dedication carried over to success on the field. The 6-2, 250-pound junior was a partner in crime with former Maryland standout pass rusher Andre Monroe last year. The two harassed backfields with a combined 27.5 tackles for loss and 16 sacks. Ngakoue, who had 13.5 and 6.0 himself, respectively, is now the featured man on the Terps' defense.

BOTTOM LINE

Maryland opens the season with three straight home games before a season-defining stretch that includes a trip to West Virginia (Sept. 26), conference opener against Michigan (Oct. 3) and visit to Ohio State (Oct. 10) before the bye week.

The Terps play Penn State at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, a game that should be interesting considering the chippy theatrics in last year's game. Maryland also has back-to-back games against Wisconsin (Nov. 7) and at Michigan State (Nov. 14).

Edsall will get Maryland back to a bowl game despite that slate.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **5**

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Richmond	
S.12	Bowling Green	
S.19	South Florida	24-17
S.26	@WEST VIRGINIA	37-40
O.3	Michigan	23-16
O.10	@OHIO STATE	24-52
O.24	Penn State (at Baltimore, MD)	20-19
O.31	@IOWA	38-31
N.7	Wisconsin	7-52
N.14	@MICHIGAN STATE	15-37
N.21	Indiana	37-15
N.28	@RUTGERS	38-41

COACH

Randy Edsall
Fifth year (20-30)
Career record: 94-100

Offensive coordinator: Mike Locksley (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator: Keith Dudzinski (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Stanford in the Foster Farms Bowl, 45-21)
Stadium: Byrd Stadium (54,000)
Tickets: 800-IM-A-TERP
Site: College Park, Md.
Website: umterps.com
Twitter: @MarylandPride

RUTGERS
SCARLET KNIGHTS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **6**

Leonte Carroo

Rutgers enjoyed a half-and-half debut in its first season in the Big Ten. The Scarlet Knights jumped out to a 5-1 start before the bye week, which included a 26-24 win at home against Michigan in prime time.

From there, Rutgers lost four of five and wasn't competitive in losses to Ohio State, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Michigan State. Coach Kyle Flood still guided the Scarlet Knights to their fourth straight bowl game and an 8-5 season, so there's a foundation to build on.

Ben McDaniels takes over for Ralph Friedgen as offensive coordinator, and there are pieces still around to put together a prolific unit.

Sophomore Hayden Rettig, an LSU transfer, will battle with Chris Laviano and Giovanni Rescigno to replace Gary Nova at quarterback. Rettig was a highly recruited four-star quarterback in 2013, and he has the luxury of throwing to star receiver Leonte Carroo, the top returning pass catcher in the Big Ten (1,086 yards, 10 TDs). Carroo had at least 100 yards receiving in four conference games.

The Scarlet Knights have holes, though. Leading rusher Desmon Peoples averaged just 3.9 yards per carry in 2014. Paul James, Robert Martin, Josh Hicks and Justin Goodwin will also push for carries. It looks like a committee approach, but Rutgers has just two returning starters on the offensive line.

The defense allowed 30.2 points per game last season, which tied for 11th in the Big Ten. Linebacker Steve Longa led the Scarlet Knights with 102 tackles. Fellow linebacker Quentin Gause had seven tackles for loss, and defensive tackle Darius Hamilton finished with six sacks.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Leonte Carroo, WR

After a 55-catch, 1,086-yard, 10-touchdown season, Carroo was this close to declaring for the NFL Draft. So close that he requested an evaluation from the NFL Draft Advisory Board. It was recommended that the 6-1, 205-pound sure-handed receiver stay in school and work on gaining separation and getting out of cuts faster. Benchmarks for Carroo in 2015 include these career marks: 100 receptions, 2,500 receiving yards and 30 receiving touchdowns.

BOTTOM LINE

Rutgers' lone road nonconference game is at Army on Nov. 21. Washington State and Kansas come to Piscataway in September, and there's a budding rivalry with Penn State sandwiched in between.

The home Big Ten schedule is brutal. Michigan State (Oct. 10), Ohio State (Oct. 24) and Nebraska (Nov. 14) all come in, and Rutgers has back-to-back road games at Wisconsin (Oct. 31) and Michigan (Nov. 7). If Flood can get back to eight wins and keep the bowl streak alive, it would be an accomplishment. Rutgers will need a few more defensive stops to get there.

Big Ten - East

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
9.5	Norfolk State	
9.12	Washington State	41-38
9.19	@PENN STATE	10-13
9.26	Kansas	
10.10	Michigan State	3-45
10.17	@INDIANA	45-23
10.24	Ohio State	17-56
10.31	@WISCONSIN	0-37
11.7	@MICHIGAN	26-24
11.14	Nebraska	24-42
11.21	@ARMY	
11.28	Maryland	41-38

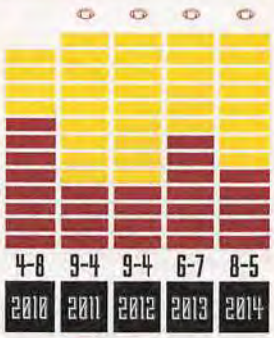
COACH

Kyle Flood
Fourth year (23-16)
Career record: 23-16
Offensive coordinator: Ben McDaniels (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Joe Rossi (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat North Carolina in the Quick Lane Bowl, 40-21)
Stadium: High Point Solutions Stadium (52,454)
Tickets: 866-445-GORU
Site: Piscataway, N.J.
Website: scarletknights.com
Twitter: @RFootball

5-YEAR RECORD 36-28



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Hayden Rettig (6-3, 205, So.)
RB	Desmon Peoples (5-8, 175, Jr.)
FB	Kevin Marquez (6-1, 235, Jr.)
LT	Keith Lumpkin (6-8, 310, Sr.)
LG	Dorian Miller (6-3, 285, So.)
C	Chris Muller (6-6, 300, So.)
RG	Tariq Cole (6-6, 350, Fr.)
RT	J.J. Denman (6-6, 300, Jr.)
TE	Nick Arcidiacono (6-5, 235, Jr.)
WR	Leonte Carroo (6-1, 205, Sr.)
WR	Andre Patton (6-4, 200, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Djwany Mera (6-4, 260, Sr.)
NT	Sebastian Joseph (6-4, 285, So.)
DT	Darius Hamilton (6-4, 255, Sr.)
DE	Kemoko Turay (6-6, 235, So.)
OLB	Steve Longa (6-1, 225, Jr.)
MLB	Brandon Russell (6-1, 210, Fr.)
OLB	Quentin Gause (6-1, 220, Sr.)
CB	Nadir Barnwell (5-11, 185, Jr.)
CB	Dre Boggs (5-11, 175, So.)
FS	Delon Stephenson (5-11, 190, Jr.)
SS	Kiy Hester (6-0, 205, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Kyle Federico (6-0, 190, Sr.)
P	Tim Gleeson (6-2, 195, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES (247 STAR RATING)

1. **Marques Ford,** DE ★★★★
2. **Najee Clayton,** S ★★★
3. **Michael Dare,** QB ★★★

Rutgers signed 26 prospects in the 2015 class, a group that finished No. 11 in the Big Ten. There's one four-star in defensive end Marques Ford, a Sunshine State standout who spurned more than 30 offers to be a Scarlet Knight. Coach Kyle Flood and his staff have some versatile athletes with great frames and speed headed to Piscataway.

CARROO: TED S. WARREN / AP

INDIANA HOOSIERS

5-YEAR RECORD 19-41

Tegray Scales

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **7**

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Nate Sudfeld (6-5, 240, Sr.)
RB Jordan Howard (6-1, 225, Jr.)
LT Jason Spriggs (6-7, 305, Sr.)
LG DeAndre Herron (6-5, 305, Sr.)
C Jake Reed (6-4, 288, Sr.)
RG Dan Feeney (6-4, 305, Jr.)
RT Ralston Evans (6-4, 290, Sr.)
TE Michael Cooper (6-5, 257, Sr.)
WR Dominique Booth (6-1, 206, So.)
WR Simmie Cobbs Jr. (6-4, 215, So.)
WR J-Shun Harris (5-8, 170, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Adarius Rayner (6-2, 300, Sr.)
DE Shawn Heffern (6-6, 275, Jr.)
NT Nate Hoff (6-2, 300, So.)
LB Clyde Newton (6-1, 230, Jr.)
LB Nick Mangieri (6-5, 270, Sr.)
LB T.J. Simmons (6-0, 233, Jr.)
LB Tegray Scales (6-0, 220, So.)
CB Donovan Clark (5-10, 180, So.)
CB Rashard Fant (5-10, 175, So.)
FS Chase Dutra (6-1, 205, So.)
SS Antonio Allen (5-10, 205, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Griffin Oakes (5-10, 197, So.)
P Erich Toth (6-3, 208, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

1. **Tyler Green,** S ★★★★
2. **Camion Patrick,** WR ★★★
3. **Leon Thornton,** WR ★★★

Indiana just missed signing a top-50 class, but the recruiting continues to be as good as it has been in recent memory under coach Kevin Wilson and his staff. The focus for the Hoosiers was athleticism on both sides of the ball, landing playmakers at the receiver position and adding more athleticism to the back seven on defense. Indiana signed 22 prospects, none ranked higher than former Ohio State four-star safety commit Tyler Green.

Indiana took a step back in coach Kevin Wilson's fourth season with a 4-8 record and 1-7 finish in the Big Ten.

The Hoosiers' M.O. throughout Wilson's tenure hasn't changed. Indiana ranked third in the Big Ten in yards per game (429.0), and the offense has its moments, none more special than the 31-27 victory against SEC East champion Missouri in 2014.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Tegray Scales, LB

What's expected of a freshman linebacker? Probably not earning a starting spot on a unit with three seniors. Probably not being seventh on the team in tackles (43). Probably not finishing third in sacks and certainly not leading the team in interceptions. With his perfect combination of speed and physicality, the 215-pound Cincinnati product accomplished all of that in 2014. This year expectations are quite high.

Indiana, however, must replace star running back Tevin Coleman, who finished with 2,036 rushing yards and seventh in the Heisman Trophy voting. Coleman had an uncanny knack for busting the big play in the Hoosiers' offense. He'll be replaced by Jordan Howard, a junior transfer from UAB who is eligible to play right away after the Blazers' football program folded. Howard rushed for 1,587 yards and 13 TDs for the Blazers last season.

Nate Sudfeld returns at quarterback after missing Indiana's last six games because of a shoulder injury. He'll miss leading receiver Shane Wynn (708 yards, 3 TDs), who graduated. Indiana's offensive line also has four seniors, including honorable mention All-Big Ten tackle Jason Spriggs and junior guard Dan Feeney.

Indiana can score points, but will they stop anybody? Second-year defensive coordinator Brian Knorr's task is simple: Improve a defense that allowed a Big Ten-worst 36.1 points per game. The Hoosiers return six defensive starters, including safety Antonio Allen, who led the team with 74 tackles. Linebacker T.J. Simmons will also be counted on, and sophomore nose tackle Nate Hoff could develop into an All-Big Ten selection.

BOTTOM LINE

Indiana probably won't play a ranked team in nonconference play, but the showdown with Western Kentucky (Sept. 19) should be a shootout. The Hoosiers travel to Wake Forest before Big Ten play begins.

Indiana opens Big Ten play with defending national champion Ohio State coming to Memorial Stadium on Oct. 3. Back-to-back road games at Maryland and Purdue to close the season could determine whether or not Indiana makes the postseason, which would be a first since 2007. That should be Wilson's primary goal in 2015.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Southern Illinois	
S.12	Florida International	
S.19	Western Kentucky	
S.26	@WAKE FOREST	
O.3	Ohio State	27-42
O.10	@PENN STATE	7-13
O.17	Rutgers	23-45
O.24	@MICHIGAN STATE	17-56
N.7	Iowa	29-45
N.14	Michigan	10-34
N.21	@MARYLAND	15-37
N.28	@PURDUE	23-16

COACH

Kevin Wilson
Fifth year (14-34)
Career record: 14-34

Offensive coordinators: Kevin Johns (fifth year) and Greg Frey (second year)
Defensive coordinators: William Inge (third year) and Brian Knorr (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 4-8
Stadium: Memorial Stadium (52,929)
Tickets: 866-IUSPORTS
Site: Bloomington, Ind.
Website: iuhoosiers.com
Twitter: @HoosierFootball

Big Ten - East

SCALES: L G. PATTERSON/AP

WISCONSIN
BADGERS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1

Corey Clement

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Alabama (at Arlington, TX)	
S.12	Miami (OH)	
S.19	Troy	
S.26	Hawaii	
O.3	Iowa	26-24
O.10	@NEBRASKA	59-24
O.17	Purdue	34-16
O.24	@ILLINOIS	38-28
O.31	Rutgers	37-0
N.7	@MARYLAND	52-7
N.21	Northwestern	14-20
N.28	@MINNESOTA	34-24

COACH
Paul Chryst
First year
Career record: 19-20
Offensive coordinator: Joe Rudolph (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Dave Aranda (third year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 11-3
(Beat Auburn in the Outback Bowl, 34-31)
Stadium: Camp Randall Stadium (80,321)
Tickets: 800-GO-BADGERS
Site: Madison, Wis.
Website: uwbadgers.com
Twitter: @BadgerFootball

Wisconsin fans still might be trying to make sense of last December.

Ohio State destroyed the Badgers 59-0 in the Big Ten Championship Game. Four days later, coach Gary Andersen left for the Oregon State job after two seasons. Athletic director Barry Alvarez hired former assistant Paul Chryst away from Pitt, and Alvarez redeemed the Badgers by serving as interim coach in a 34-31 win against Auburn in the Outback Bowl. No matter how you look at it, Wisconsin still finished 11-3 and enters 2015 as the favorite to defend the Big Ten West Division championship.

Chryst fits the Alvarez mold, but there's a catch. In order to take the next step and become a true playoff contender, the Badgers must find the right quarterback. Chryst served as offensive coordinator at Wisconsin in 2011, when Russell Wilson led an offense that ranked sixth in the nation in points per game (44.1).

That's the Badgers' No. 1 question in 2015. Senior quarterback Joel Stave completed just 53.4 percent of his passes with nine TDs and 10 interceptions last season. Tanner McEvoy is a candidate to push Stave, but McEvoy also could start at strong safety. Chryst also recruited redshirt junior Bart Houston back in 2011.

The rest of the time-tested formula is in place, even without Melvin Gordon, who set the Big Ten single-season rushing record (2,587 yards) and finished second in the Heisman Trophy voting last season. Corey Clement and Taiwan Deal form the Badgers' next rushing tag team, and leading receiver Alex Erickson also returns.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Corey Clement, RB

While Melvin Gordon was destroying team, conference and NCAA records last season, Clement was just waiting in the wings—if you can call 1,068 all-purpose yards and 11 total touchdowns "waiting in the wings." The combination of Clement and Gordon (3,536 rushing yards in 2014) easily eclipsed the previous combinations of Gordon and James White (3,053 yards in 2013) and White and Montee Ball (2,636 in 2012). There's no doubt that Clements is Wisconsin's next record-challenging feature back.

Two honorable mention All-Big Ten selections—left tackle Tyler Marz and center Dan Voltz—will anchor the team's heavy offensive line. How offensive coordinator Joe Rudolph, who came over with Chryst from Pitt, allows this unit to flow will be worth watching.

There were fewer questions about the defense before the meltdown against the Buckeyes, but Wisconsin still ranked second in the Big Ten in yards per game (294.1), and defensive coordinator Dave Aranda stayed on the staff. Several key pieces return. Linebackers Joe Schobert and Vince Biegel

CLEMENT: MORRY GASH / AP

combined for 30 tackles for loss. Second-team All-Big Ten safety and leading tackler Michael Caputo and cornerback Darius Hillary lead the secondary, though Wisconsin had just six interceptions in 2014.

BOTTOM LINE

Wisconsin will find out exactly where it stands in the opener. The Badgers play Alabama in the Cowboys Classic at AT&T Stadium, which is yet another statement game for the Big Ten. That's the highlight of the nonconference schedule.

Wisconsin catches a break with the crossover Big Ten games against Rutgers (Oct. 31) and Maryland (Nov. 7), and the regular-season finale at Minnesota (Nov. 28) is tricky. The Badgers' hopes for a return to Indianapolis hang on a road test at Nebraska (Oct. 10) midway through the season. Wisconsin lost in its last visit to Lincoln in 2012, and Nebraska will be looking for revenge after last season's 59-24 loss. It's an emerging Big Ten rivalry worth watching.

Despite the stiff test in the opener, Wisconsin still is the odds-on favorite to win the Big Ten West and could make a run at the spot in the four-team College Football Playoff with a little help. That, of course, depends on whether or not this team learned anything from the debacle against the Buckeyes last season. There might be a rematch in store.

Joel Stave

STAVE: JOHN RAOUX / AP; MASCOT: RINGO H.W. CHIU / AP

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

1. Jordan Stevenson, RB ★★★★
2. Arrington Farrar, LB ★★★★
3. Kevin Estes, OT ★★★★

The Badgers went through a surprising coaching change for a second time in just a few years but the culture stays the same under coach Paul Chryst and his staff. This 20-player class ranked No. 5 in the Big Ten, led by a talented offensive-line group and one of the Lone Star State's top running backs in Jordan Stevenson, a former Texas commit. The Badgers addressed a need at linebacker, led by four-star prospect Arrington Farrar. Also, as with most Wisconsin recruiting classes, several players who signed could play multiple positions in Madison.

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Joel Stave	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	10	113.2	110-206-10	53.4	1350	9	135.0

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Corey Clement	14	147	949	6.5	9	67.8

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Alex Erickson	14	55	772	14.0	3	55.1

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Michael Caputo	14	64	42	106

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Vince Biegel	14	7.5	43

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Lubern Figaro	1	43	43.0	0
Michael Caputo	1	27	27.0	0

BEHIND THE MASK

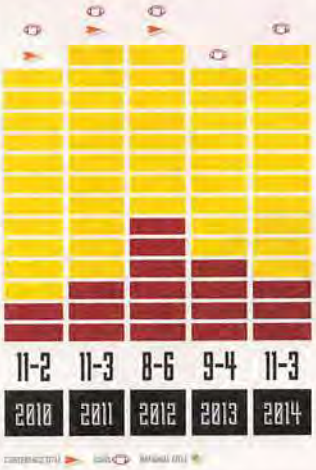
Bucky Badger was first introduced in 1949, and the name originated from the lyrics of a song that encouraged the team to "buck right through that line."

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	WISC.	OPP
SCORING	484	291
Points Per Game	34.6	20.8
FIRST DOWNS	308	206
Rushing	189	93
Passing	103	93
Penalty	16	20
RUSHING YARDAGE	4482	1765
Yards gained rushing	4736	2185
Yards lost rushing	254	420
Rushing Attempts	648	492
Average Per Rush	6.9	3.6
Average Per Game	320.1	126.1
TDs Rushing	46	19
PASSING YARDAGE	2082	2352
Comp-Att-Int	177-322-16	170-347-6
Average Per Pass	6.5	6.8
Average Per Catch	11.8	13.8
Average Per Game	148.7	168.0
TDs Passing	15	15
TOTAL OFFENSE	6564	4117
Total Plays	970	839
Average Per Play	6.8	4.9
Average Per Game	468.9	294.1
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	31-671	63-1254
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	25-277	18-145
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	6-121	16-103
KICK RETURN AVG.	21.6	19.9
PUNT RETURN AVG.	11.1	8.1
INT RETURN AVG.	20.2	6.4
FUMBLES-LOST	23-10	20-11
PENALTIES-YARDS	65-607	82-645
Average Per Game	43.4	46.1
PUNTS-YARDS	61-2263	98-4222
Average Per Punt	37.1	43.1
Net punt average	33.7	39.2
TIME OF POSS./GAME	33:39	26:21
3RD-DOWN CONV.	68/178	54/190
3rd-Down Pct.	38%	28%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	14/18	6/13
4th-Down Pct.	78%	46%
SACKS BY-YARDS	37-252	13-99
MISC YARDS	3	0
TDS SCORED	61	35
FG-ATTEMPTS	19-22	15-18
ATTENDANCE	556642	198488
Games/Avg Per Game	7/79520	4/49622
Neutral Site Games		3/58617

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Wisconsin	76	146	156	103	3	484
Opponent	88	54	48	101	0	291

5-YEAR RECORD 50-18



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Joel Stave (6-5, 220, Sr.)
	Bart Houston (6-4, 218, Jr.)
RB	Corey Clement (5-11, 217, Jr.)
	Taiwan Deal (6-0, 216, Fr.)
RB	Derek Watt (6-2, 236, Sr.)
	Austin Ramesh (6-1, 247, So.)
LT	Tyler Marz (6-5, 321, Sr.)
	Jacob Maxwell (6-6, 295, Fr.)
LG	Ray Ball (6-7, 324, Sr.)
	George Panos (6-5, 301, Fr.)
C	Dan Voltz (6-3, 311, Jr.)
	Micah Kapoi (6-4, 323, Fr.)
RG	Michael Deiter (6-5, 317, Fr.)
	Logan Schmidt (6-4, 300, Jr.)
RT	Hayden Biegel (6-6, 303, So.)
	Walker Williams (6-7, 320, Jr.)
TE	Austin Traylor (6-3, 248, Sr.)
	Troy Fumagalli (6-5, 246, So.)
WR	Jordan Fredrick (6-4, 214, Sr.)
	Reggie Love (6-3, 214, Jr.)
WR	Alex Erickson (6-0, 196, Sr.)
	George Rushing (6-1, 190, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jake Keefer (6-3, 269, Sr.)
	James Adeyanju (6-2, 262, Sr.)
NT	Arthur Goldberg (6-3, 290, Jr.)
	Conor Sheehy (6-5, 279, So.)
DE	Chikwe Obasih (6-2, 268, So.)
	Alec James (6-3, 259, So.)
LB	Vince Biegel (6-4, 244, Jr.)
	Jesse Hayes (6-3, 229, Sr.)
LB	Joe Schobert (6-2, 240, Sr.)
	Keelon Brookins (5-10, 209, So.)
LB	T.J. Edwards (6-1, 229, Fr.)
	D'Cota Dixon (5-10, 206, So.)
LB	Leon Jacobs (6-2, 230, Jr.)
	Jack Cichy (6-2, 220, So.)
CB	Sojourn Shelton (5-9, 178, Jr.)
	Devin Gaulden (5-10, 187, Sr.)
CB	Darius Hillary (5-11, 188, Sr.)
	Derrick Tindal (5-11, 175, So.)
FS	Michael Caputo (6-1, 212, Sr.)
	Leo Musso (5-10, 194, Jr.)
SS	Tanner McEvoy (6-6, 222, Sr.)
	Lubern Figaro (6-0, 179, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Andrew Endicott (5-9, 175, Jr.)
P	Drew Meyer (6-3, 187, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

NEBRASKA
CORNHUSKERS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

2

Nate Gerry

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	BYU	
S.12	South Alabama	
S.19	@MIAMI (FL)	41-31
S.26	Southern Miss	
O.3	@ILLINOIS	45-14
O.10	Wisconsin	24-59
O.17	@MINNESOTA	24-28
O.24	Northwestern	38-17
O.31	@PURDUE	35-14
N.7	Michigan State	22-27
N.14	@RUTGERS	42-24
N.27	Iowa	37-34

COACH
Mike Riley
First year
Career record: 93-80
Offensive coordinator: Danny Langsdorf (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Mark Banker (first year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 9-4
(Lost to USC in the Holiday Bowl, 45-42)
Stadium: Memorial Stadium (87,000)
Tickets: 800-8-BIGRED
Site: Lincoln, Neb.
Website: huskers.com
Twitter: @Huskers

Nine wasn't enough to keep Bo Pelini in Lincoln.

Nebraska surprised some by firing Pelini after the Cornhuskers' regular-season finale in 2014 despite seven consecutive seasons with at least nine wins. Pelini's often-abrasive nature clearly had run its course.

Here's the gamble Nebraska athletic director Shawn Eichorst is taking. The Cornhuskers hired 62-year-old Mike Riley, who won nine games just four times in 14 years between two stints at Oregon State, to take over a program with forever-unrealistic expectations.

That's forced a "get-to-know" period for a fanbase still looking for its first Big Ten championship and one that's itching for a return to the national stage. Riley—whether he likes it or not—is going to be held to an "at-least-nine-wins" standard even in Year One. If it doesn't work, Nebraska fans will point back to 2003, when former Huskers coach Frank Solich was replaced by Bill Callahan.

Riley brought Danny Langsdorf, who served as the New York Giants' quarterbacks coach after a stint as Oregon State's offensive coordinator, to run Nebraska's offense. Expect a transition to a more pro-style attack, and that won't be easy given the loss of do-everything running back Ameer Abdullah, who finished his career second on the school's career rushing list with 4,588 yards. First-team All-Big Ten receiver Kenny Bell is also gone.

Six starters return on offense, including quarterback Tommy Armstrong Jr., whom Riley has said won't be counted on to run as much in the new scheme. That means Armstrong Jr. must develop as a more accurate passer. He has completed just 52.9 percent of his passes the last two seasons. Despite the loss of Bell, Jordan Westerkamp (747 receiving yards, 5 TDs) and De'Mornay Pierson-El (321, 4) are reliable receivers, and tight end Cethan Carter could take on a bigger role in the passing attack.

Replacing Abdullah is nearly impossible, but Imani Cross averaged 5.1 yards per carry last season and Terrell Newby scored five times. They'll split carries. Nebraska didn't have an offensive lineman on the All-Big Ten first or second team last season, but senior

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Nate Gerry, S

The pride of South Dakota, Gerry returned to his natural position last year after playing linebacker in 2013. The chiseled 6-2, 205-pound safety from Sioux Falls showed that he is indeed a natural, finishing with a team-leading 49 solo tackles (88 overall), five interceptions and a fumble recovery for a touchdown. He and his Husker secondary mates allowed just 15 passing TDs in 2014, but his load is heavier now after the departures of fellow defensive backs Josh Mitchell and Corey Cooper.

GERRY: NATI HARNIK / AP

left tackle Alex Lewis could change that in 2015.

Defensive coordinator Mark Banker, also brought over from Oregon State, takes over the "Blackshirts," a unit that allowed 26.4 points per game last season. Stud defensive end Randy Gregory (7.0 sacks) and leading tackler Zaire Anderson are gone. That leaves tackle Maliek Collins, who had 14 tackles for loss, as the anchor. Junior LeRoy Alexander returns after serving a suspension in 2014, and junior Nate Gerry had five interceptions last season. The cupboard isn't bare on defense.

BOTTOM LINE

If Riley wants to make an impression, he could beat a few ranked Big Ten teams. Pelini finished 3-6 against such teams, and that included two blowout losses to Wisconsin (2011, 2014) and disasters at Michigan (2011) and Ohio State (2012). That doesn't even count the 70-31 loss to Wisconsin in the 2012 Big Ten Championship Game.

It won't be an easy September. Nebraska opens against BYU and travels to Miami (Sept. 19). The two toughest games on the Big Ten schedule are at home against Wisconsin (Oct. 10) and Michigan State (Nov. 7), and the regular-season finale against Iowa (Nov. 27) could determine whether or not this experienced team can get back to the Big Ten Championship Game. With the preemptive bar set at nine wins, Riley has his work cut out in Year One.

Tommy Armstrong Jr.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Coach Mike Riley and his new staff came in with a philosophy that they're going to take the best available player down the stretch. Riley did well with that philosophy while keeping just about everyone previously committed to Bo Pelini's staff in the boat as well. Nebraska loaded up in the secondary with Eric Lee and Avery Anderson, got an immediate difference-maker at linebacker in Dedrick Young and landed a player with as much upside as any Big Ten recruit in defensive end Daishon Neal. Defense was obviously addressed in this recruiting cycle. a 20-player class that ranked No. 31 nationally and No. 4 in the Big Ten.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Eric Lee, CB ★★★★
2. Jalin Barnett, OL ★★★★
3. Avery Anderson, CB ★★★★

ARMSTRONG: MORRY GASH / AP; MASCOT: NATI HARNIK / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Tommy Armstrong Jr. GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
13	133.0	184-345-12	53.3	2695	22	207.3

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
T. Armstrong Jr.	13	145	705	4.9	6	54.2

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
J. Westerkamp	13	44	747	17.0	5	57.5

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Nate Gerry	13	49	39	88

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Maliek Collins	13	4.5	33

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Nate Gerry	5	92	18.4	0

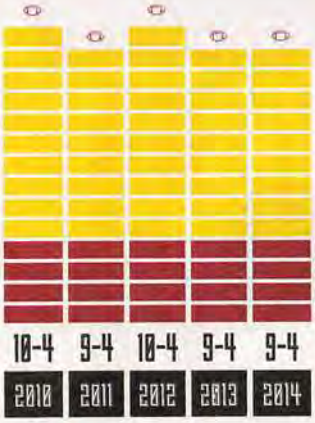
BEHIND THE MASK
Herbie Husker became the official mascot in 1974 after appearing on the Nebraska media guide. He wears a red cowboy hat, red work shirt, blue jeans and work boots to represent the state's agricultural workers.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	NEBRASKA	OPP
SCORING	491	343
Points Per Game	37.8	26.4
FIRST DOWNS	290	246
Rushing	149	113
Passing	115	118
Penalty	26	15
RUSHING YARDAGE	3123	2312
Yards gained rushing	3360	2633
Yards lost rushing	237	321
Rushing Attempts	587	488
Average Per Rush	5.3	4.7
Average Per Game	240.2	177.8
TDs Rushing	35	25
PASSING YARDAGE	2757	2676
Comp-Att-Int	190-359-12	214-441-13
Average Per Pass	7.7	6.1
Average Per Catch	14.5	12.5
Average Per Game	212.1	205.8
TDs Passing	24	15
TOTAL OFFENSE	5880	4988
Total Plays	946	929
Average Per Play	6.2	5.4
Average Per Game	452.3	383.7
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	43-894	59-1248
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	39-620	16-143
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	13-124	12-181
KICK RETURN AVG.	20.8	21.2
PUNT RETURN AVG.	15.9	8.9
INT RETURN AVG.	9.5	15.1
FUMBLES-LOST	27-13	20-10
PENALTIES-YARDS	75-655	78-680
Average Per Game	50.4	52.3
PUNTS-YARDS	64-2628	90-3488
Average Per Punt	41.1	38.8
Net punt average	37.3	31.2
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:16	29:44
3RD-DOWN CONV.	76/184	58/193
3rd-Down Pct.	41%	30%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	6/13	10/20
4th-Down Pct.	46%	50%
SACKS BY-YARDS	29-240	22-129
MISC YARDS	89	0
TDS SCORED	64	44
FG-ATTEMPTS	15-22	11-16
ATTENDANCE	638744	311720
Games/Avg Per Game	7/91249	5/62344
Neutral Site Games		1/55789

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Nebraska	104	141	113	127	6	491
Opponent	71	96	111	62	3	343

5-YEAR RECORD 47-20



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Tommy Armstrong Jr. (6-1, 220, Jr.)
	Johnny Stanton (6-2, 230, So.)
RB	Terrell Newby (5-10, 200 Jr.)
	Imani Cross (6-1, 240, Sr.)
LT	Alex Lewis (6-6, 290, Sr.)
	David Knevel (6-9, 310, So.)
LG	Dylan Utter (6-1, 285, Jr.)
	Nick Gates (6-5, 290, Fr.)
C	Ryne Reeves (6-3, 300, Sr.)
	Dylan Utter (6-1, 285, Jr.)
RG	Chongo Kondolo (6-4, 300, Sr.)
	Tanner Farmer (6-4, 310, Fr.)
RT	Givens Price (6-4, 310, Sr.)
	Zach Sterup (6-8, 320, Sr.)
TE	Cethan Carter (6-4, 240, Jr.)
	Sam Cotton (6-4, 250, Jr.)
WR	Alonzo Moore (6-2, 195, Jr.)
	Brandon Reilly (6-1, 195, Jr.)
WR	Jordan Westerkamp (6-0, 195, Jr.)
	Taariq Allen (6-3, 200, Sr.)
WR	De'Mornay Pierson-El (5-9, 185, So.)
	Jamal Turner (6-1, 190, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Greg McMullen (6-3, 280, Jr.)
	Joe Keels (6-3, 265, Sr.)
DT	Maliek Collins (6-2, 300, Jr.)
	Kevin Maurice (6-3, 280, Jr.)
DT	Vincent Valentine (6-3, 320, Jr.)
	Kevin Williams (6-2, 275, Sr.)
DE	Jack Gangwish (6-2, 265, Sr.)
	A.J. Natter (6-5, 250, So.)
OLB	David Santos (6-0, 225, Sr.)
	Dedrick Young (6-1, 220, Fr.)
MLB	Marcus Newby (6-1, 235, So.)
	Josh Banderas (6-2, 235, Jr.)
OLB	Michael Rose-Ivey (5-11, 240, Jr.)
	Garrett McKay (6-0, 210, Jr.)
CB	Daniel Davie (6-1, 190, Sr.)
	Eric Lee Jr. (6-0, 180, Fr.)
CB	Byerson Cockrell (6-0, 185, Sr.)
	Jonathan Rose (6-1, 195, Sr.)
FS	Nate Gerry (6-2, 205, Jr.)
	Kieron Williams (6-0, 190, So.)
SS	LeRoy Alexander (6-0, 195, Jr.)
	Charles Jackson (5-11, 180, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Drew Brown (5-11, 180, So.)
P	Sam Foltz (6-1, 200, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

MINNESOTA
GOLDEN GOPHERS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **3**

Briean Boddy-Calhoun

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	TCU	7-30
S.12	@COLORADO STATE	
S.19	Kent State	
S.26	Ohio	
O.3	@NORTHWESTERN	24-17
O.10	@PURDUE	39-38
O.17	Nebraska	28-24
O.31	Michigan	30-14
N.7	@OHIO STATE	24-31
N.14	@IOWA	51-14
N.21	Illinois	24-28
N.28	Wisconsin	24-34

COACH
Jerry Kill
Fifth year (25-26)
Career record: 152-99
Offensive coordinator: Matt Limegrover (fifth year)
Defensive coordinator: Tracy Claeys (fifth year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Missouri in the Citrus Bowl, 33-17)
Stadium: TCF Bank Stadium (50,805)
Tickets: 800-U-GOPHER
Site: Minneapolis
Website: gophersports.com
Twitter: @GopherFootball

It has been a slow climb, but coach Jerry Kill has developed success at Minnesota over the past four years. The Gophers are working on back-to-back 8-5 seasons, and it's a program looking to take the next step in the Big Ten West.

Kill might have the best dual-threat quarterback in the division at his disposal in junior Mitch Leidner, a 6-4, 236-pounder who rushed for 452 yards and 10 TDs last season. Leidner also progressed as a passer, but he needs to improve his accuracy (51.5 percent).

Leidner will have to make it work with a new cast of playmakers. Leading rusher David Cobb was lost to graduation, first-team All-Big Ten tight end Maxx Williams entered the NFL Draft and receiver Donovahn Jones was dismissed for the team.

Finding the right mix in the backfield will be the key for the Gophers. Minnesota ranked third in the Big Ten in rushing attempts last season (599), and Rodrick Williams and Berkley Edwards (younger brother of former Michigan standout Braylon Edwards) should serve as the inside-outside tandem.

The receiving corps is inexperienced outside of senior KJ Maye, and three starters return on the offensive line. Filling the void left by Williams at tight end will be the other missing piece to find, but senior Lincoln Plsek and sophomore Brandon Lingen figure to be active in the offense at that position.

The defense's No. 1 priority is finding a replacement for linebacker Damien Wilson, who led the Gophers with 119 tackles and 10.5 tackles for loss. Senior De'Vondre Campbell is a candidate to fill that void; he finished with 75 tackles last season.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Briean Boddy-Calhoun, CB

The journey has been long for Boddy-Calhoun—arriving from a Kansas junior college in 2011, playing a limited role for the Gophers in 2012 and missing the entire 2013 season with a leg injury. But the 5-11, 190-pound Delaware native, who literally made a name for himself in 2012 when he added on "Calhoun," did so again in the Big Ten last year with five interceptions, nine pass breakups and two forced fumbles en route to all-conference honors.

The Gophers can hang their hat on a strong pass defense that returns four seniors in cornerbacks Eric Murray, Briean Boddy-Calhoun and safeties Antonio Johnson and Damarius Travis. Minnesota allowed just 193.5 passing yards per game in 2014. Punter Peter Mortell averaged 45.1 yards per punt last season and is a weapon on special teams.

BOTTOM LINE
Minnesota won't have to wait long to get a shot to make an impression. The Gophers welcome TCU in a Thursday night opener Sept. 3. The Horned Frogs routed Minnesota 30-7 last season. Kill's team also has a trip to

BODDY-CALHOUN: NATI HARNIK / AP

Colorado State the following week.

The Big Ten fate will be determined in a four-week stretch from Oct. 17-Nov. 7 when the Gophers host Nebraska and Michigan before a trip to Ohio State. Minnesota upset the Cornhuskers and reclaimed the Little Brown Jug from the Wolverines in 2014, but the Gophers haven't won at Ohio State since 2000. If Minnesota wants to compete for a Big Ten championship, wins in two of three of the games are necessary. That sets up the finale against Wisconsin on Nov. 28. The Badgers beat the Gophers 34-24 in Madison last season.

With Wisconsin and Nebraska welcoming first-year coaches, the window is open for Minnesota to make its move. If Leidner finds some new playmakers, it's possible. Another goal for the Gophers is a postseason win; they're 0-3 in bowl games under Kill.

Mitch Leidner and head coach Jerry Kill

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Coach Jerry Kill and his staff develop players as well as any program in the country and they will look to do the same with this 24-player class that ranked 13th in the Big Ten. The Gophers find under-the-radar recruits who have speed, length and toughness. One of the better finds in the Big Ten could be quarterback Demry Croft, who earned his scholarship in one of Minnesota's camps. This is a class full of players where two or three years down the road other schools may be saying, "Why didn't we go after that guy?"

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Dior Johnson, S ★★★
2. Quinn Oseland, OL ★★★
3. Tyler Moore, OL ★★★

LEIDNER, KILL: DAVID J. PHILLIP / AP; MASCOT: ANN HEISENFELT / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Mitch Leidner	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	12	123.8	122-237-8	51.5	1798	11	149.8

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Mitch Leidner	12	126	452	3.6	10	37.7

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
KJ Maye	13	16	298	18.6	1	22.9

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
De'Vondre Campbell	13	49	26	75

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Theiren Cockran	13	4.0	32

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Briean Boddy-Calhoun	5	59	11.8	0

BEHIND THE MASK

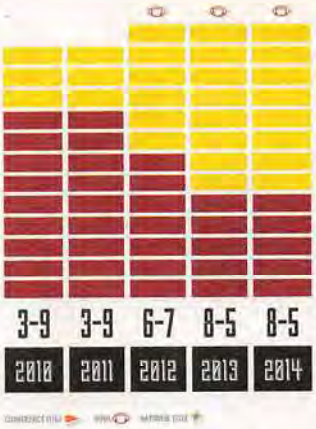
Minnesota was coined the "Gopher State" in 1857, but it wasn't until radio announcer Halsey Hall referred to the team as the Golden Gophers in 1934 that the name stuck. **Goldy Gopher** debuted in 1952 as a member of the marching band.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	MINN	OPP
SCORING	369	314
Points Per Game	28.4	24.2
FIRST DOWNS	238	253
Rushing	148	113
Passing	76	117
Penalty	14	23
RUSHING YARDAGE	2801	2271
Yards gained rushing	3064	2611
Yards lost rushing	263	340
Rushing Attempts	599	476
Average Per Rush	4.7	4.8
Average Per Game	215.5	174.7
TDs Rushing	32	18
PASSING YARDAGE	1844	2515
Comp-Att-Int	127-254-9	233-406-15
Average Per Pass	7.3	6.2
Average Per Catch	14.5	10.8
Average Per Game	141.8	193.5
TDs Passing	12	20
TOTAL OFFENSE	4645	4786
Total Plays	853	882
Average Per Play	5.4	5.4
Average Per Game	357.3	368.2
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	36-825	30-566
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	24-210	22-119
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	15-179	9-103
KICK RETURN AVG.	22.9	18.9
PUNT RETURN AVG.	8.8	5.4
INT RETURN AVG.	11.9	11.4
FUMBLES-LOST	22-11	29-15
PENALTIES-YARDS	69-605	59-508
Average Per Game	46.5	39.1
PUNTS-YARDS	68-3025	69-2754
Average Per Punt	44.5	39.9
Net punt average	39.2	34.6
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:25	28:35
3RD-DOWN CONV.	71/176	74/183
3rd-Down Pct.	40%	40%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	7/10	11/17
4th-Down Pct.	70%	65%
SACKS BY-YARDS	27-175	21-150
MISC YARDS	0	86
TDS SCORED	48	40
FG-ATTEMPTS	12-18	12-16
ATTENDANCE	335056	362848
Games/Avg Per Game	7/47865	5/72570
Neutral Site Games		1/48624

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Minnesota	80	106	99	84	0	369
Opponent	76	85	63	90	0	314

5-YEAR RECORD 28-35



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Mitch Leidner (6-4, 236, Jr.)
	Chris Streveler (6-2, 227, So.)
FB	Miles Thomas (5-11, 250, Sr.)
	Tyler Hartmann (6-3, 251, Jr.)
RB	Rodrick Williams (5-11, 229, Sr.)
	Berkley Edwards (5-9, 192, So.)
LT	Ben Lauer (6-7, 314, Jr.)
	Foster Bush (6-5, 319, Sr.)
LG	Josh Campion (6-5, 310, Sr.)
	Luke Rasmussen (6-7, 284, So.)
C	Jon Christenson (6-4, 296, Sr.)
	Brian Bobek (6-2, 297, Sr.)
RG	Joe Bjorklund (6-5, 296, Sr.)
	Isaac Hayes (6-2, 310, Jr.)
RT	Jonah Pirsig (6-9, 324, Jr.)
	Alex Mayes (6-6, 310, So.)
TE	Lincoln Plsek (6-4, 266, Sr.)
	Brandon Lingen (6-5, 245, So.)
WR	Desmond Gant (6-3, 214, So.)
	Isaiah Gentry (6-4, 205, So.)
WR	KJ Maye (5-10, 199, Sr.)
	Eric Carter (5-11, 189, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Theiren Cockran (6-6, 257, Sr.)
	Alex Keith (6-3, 253, Sr.)
DT	Steven Richardson (6-0, 291, So.)
	Robert Ndondo-Lay (6-5, 266, Sr.)
DT	Hendrick Ekpe (6-5, 244, Jr.)
	Gary Moore (6-4, 287, So.)
DE	Scott Ekpe (6-4, 292, Sr.)
	Gaelin Elmore (6-6, 262, So.)
OLB	De'Vondre Campbell (6-5, 241, Sr.)
	De'Niro Laster (6-4, 226, So.)
MLB	Jack Lynn (6-3, 240, Jr.)
	Nick Rallis (5-11, 233, Jr.)
OLB	Cody Poock (6-2, 236, Jr.)
	Chris Wipson (6-2, 219, So.)
CB	Eric Murray (6-0, 196, Sr.)
	Jalen Myrick (5-10, 208, Jr.)
CB	Briean Boddy-Calhoun (5-11, 188, Sr.)
	Craig James (5-10, 189, So.)
FS	Damarius Travis (6-2, 215, Sr.)
	Daletavious McGhee (6-1, 210, So.)
SS	Antonio Johnson (6-0, 211, Sr.)
	Ace Rogers (6-1, 207, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Ryan Santoso (6-6, 245, So.)
P	Peter Mortell (6-2, 191, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

IOWA HAWKEYES

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

4

Desmond King

Iowa's Kirk Ferentz is the longest-tenured coach in the Big Ten and enters his 17th season with the Hawkeyes. Patience, however, is starting to wear thin in Iowa City.

Consider that since the Big Ten split into two divisions in 2011, Iowa is 26-25 with a 15-17 record in conference play. The Hawkeyes haven't won a bowl game since 2010. Iowa needs to jump-start a middle-of-the-road offense (28.2 ppg in 2014) and defense (25.6) in order to see that improvement.

Quarterback figures to be the focus. Jake Rudock (16 TDs, 5 INTs) announced he was transferring to Michigan during spring ball, and C.J. Beathard (5, 2) inherits the starting job. Beathard opened the spring as the starter.

Beathard can't bank on handing off to Mark Weisman, who had 16 touchdowns last season. No other Iowa player scored more than three times.

The supporting cast is otherwise typical Iowa. Jordan Canzeri averaged 4.8 yards per rush and figures to see more carries, wide receiver Tevaun Smith was an honorable mention All-Big Ten selection and Jake Duzey is a reliable tight end. Second-team All-Big Ten lineman Austin Blythe moves back to center.

The defense returns seven starters, and senior end Drew Ott led the team with eight sacks last season. Ott's success will depend on how new interior starters Jaleel Johnson and Nathan Bazata hold up. Sophomore Bo Bower is a potential breakout candidate at linebacker, and the secondary returns three starters.

BOTTOM LINE

It's the same-old September for the Hawkeyes, with back-to-back games at Iowa State (Sept. 12) and at home against Pittsburgh (Sept. 19). Iowa lost to the Cyclones by three and beat Pitt by four last season. Expect close games again.

The crossover games against Maryland (Oct. 31) and Indiana (Nov. 7) are friendly, but all that won't matter if Iowa continues to lose ground in the Big Ten West.

The Hawkeyes are 3-7 against Wisconsin, Nebraska and Minnesota since the Big Ten split into two divisions, and the conference schedule opens with a road date at Wisconsin (Oct. 3) and closes at Nebraska (Nov. 27). Eight or nine wins is doable, but is that enough at this point?

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Desmond King, CB

With so many key players gone on offense, particularly quarterback Jake Rudock, who transferred to Michigan, the Hawkeyes will have to look to the defense for much of their playmaking. Enter the 5-11, 200-pound junior cornerback from Detroit. King tied for the team lead with three interceptions last year and led the Hawkeyes with 72 interception-return yards, including a 37-yard pick-six in a 45-28 loss to Tennessee in the TaxSlayer Bowl.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Illinois State	
S.12	@IOWA STATE	17-20
S.19	Pittsburgh	24-20
S.26	North Texas	
O.3	@WISCONSIN	24-26
O.10	Illinois	30-14
O.17	@NORTHWESTERN	48-7
O.31	Maryland	31-38
N.7	@INDIANA	45-29
N.14	Minnesota	14-51
N.21	Purdue	24-10
N.27	@NEBRASKA	34-37

COACH

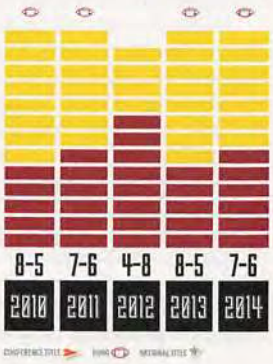
Kirk Ferentz
17th year (115-85)
Career record: 127-106

Offensive coordinator: Greg Davis (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator: Phil Parker (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Tennessee in the Gator Bowl, 45-28)
Stadium: Kinnick Stadium (70,585)
Tickets: 800-IA-HAWKS
Site: Iowa City, Iowa
Website: hawkeyesports.com
Twitter: @HawkeyeFootball

5-YEAR RECORD 34-30



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB C.J. Beathard (6-2, 209, Jr.)
TB Jordan Canzeri (5-9, 192, Sr.)
FB Adam Cox (5-11, 234, Jr.)
LT Boone Myers (6-5, 300, So.)
LG Sean Welsh (6-3, 288, So.)
C Austin Blythe (6-3, 290, Sr.)
RG Jordan Walsh (6-4, 290, Sr.)
RT Ike Boettger (6-6, 300, So.)
TE Jake Duzey (6-4, 248, Sr.)
WR Tevaun Smith (6-2, 205, Sr.)
WR Matt VandeBerg (6-1, 185, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Nate Meier (6-2, 252, Sr.)
DT Jaleel Johnson (6-4, 310, Jr.)
DT Nathan Bazata (6-2, 284, So.)
DE Drew Ott (6-4, 272, Sr.)
OLB Bo Bower (6-1, 228, So.)
MLB Ben Niemann (6-3, 225, So.)
OLB Josey Jewell (6-2, 230, So.)
CB Greg Mabin (6-2, 200, Jr.)
CB Desmond King (5-11, 200, Jr.)
FS Jordan Lomax (5-10, 205, Sr.)
SS Miles Taylor (6-0, 195, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K Marshall Koehn (6-0, 200, Sr.)
P Connor Kornbrath (6-6, 242, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **James Daniels,** OL ★★★★
2. **Landan Paulsen,** OL ★★★
3. **Levi Paulsen,** OL ★★★

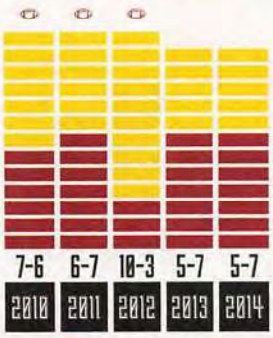
The Hawkeyes are certainly in the discussion for best offensive-line class in the Big Ten this cycle, led by touted four-star center James Daniels, who chose Iowa over his other finalists, Alabama and Ohio State. The Hawkeyes signed 21 prospects, with the emphasis on the offensive line and defensive line. Two-time Iowa Gatorade Player of the Year Ryan Boyle looks like the quarterback of the future.

KING: GENE PUSKAR / AP

Big Ten - West

NORTHWESTERN WILDCATS

5-YEAR RECORD 33-30



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Zack Oliver (6-4, 240, Sr.)
RB Justin Jackson (5-11, 185, So.)
HB Dan Vitale (6-2, 235, Sr.)
LT Shane Mertz (6-8, 310, Sr.)
LG Geoff Mogus (6-5, 305, Sr.)
C Matt Frazier (6-4, 295, Sr.)
RG Adam DePietro (6-5, 295, Jr.)
RT Eric Olson (6-6, 285, Jr.)
WR Christian Jones (6-3, 230, Sr.)
WR Miles Shuler (5-10, 180, Sr.)
WR Cameron Dickerson (6-3, 210, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Deonte Gibson (6-3, 270, Sr.)
DT Sean McEvilly (6-5, 300, Sr.)
DT C.J. Robbins (6-5, 295, Sr.)
DE Dean Lowry (6-6, 280, Sr.)
OLB Joseph Jones (6-1, 225, Jr.)
MLB Anthony Walker (6-1, 225, So.)
OLB Drew Smith (6-1, 220, Sr.)
CB Nick VanHoose (6-0, 190, Sr.)
CB Matthew Harris (5-11, 180, Jr.)
FS Godwin Igwebuike (6-0, 200, So.)
SS Traveon Henry (6-1, 220, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Jack Mitchell (6-3, 210, Jr.)
P Matt Micucci (5-11, 185, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

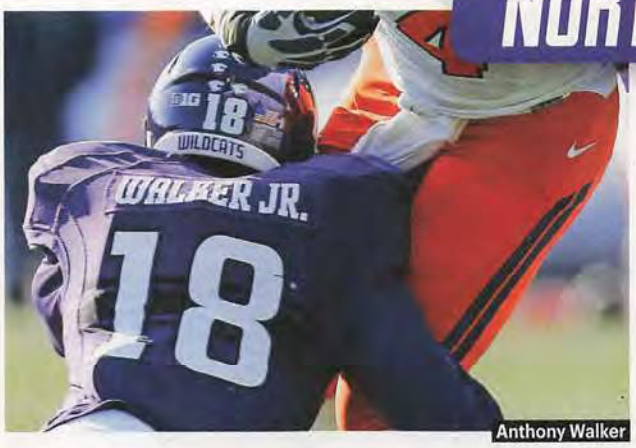
RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Jordan Thompson,** DT ★★★
2. **Joe Gaziano,** DE ★★★
3. **Flynn Nagel,** WR ★★★

The Wildcats signed 20 players in the 2015 recruiting class, and have to be happy about continuing to get more athletic on the defensive line. Jordan Thompson had a national offer list and the rest of the guys coming in bring that burst, size and length coveted in the Big Ten. Northwestern also got more exciting at the offensive skill positions, led by prolific Chicago receiver Flynn Nagel, whose name is all over the Illinois state record book.



Anthony Walker

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **5**

Pat Fitzgerald enters his 10th season as head coach at Northwestern with a little more pressure than usual. On one hand, the program has enjoyed consistent success, which included five straight bowl appearances from 2008-12.

Yet the Wildcats have endured back-to-back heartbreaking 5-7 seasons, and half of those losses were by eight points or less. Still, Northwestern proved it can jump up and bite anybody, like they did to Wisconsin and Notre Dame in 2014.

The offense returns six starters from a unit that ranked 12th in the Big Ten at 23.0 points per game. Running back Justin Jackson emerged as a playmaker with 1,216 rushing yards and 10 TDs as a freshman, and he figures to be a first-team All-Big Ten candidate.

The quarterback battle should stretch through the spring among candidates Zack Oliver, Matt Alviti and Clayton Thorson. Oliver likely will start, but Thorson, a highly recruited redshirt freshman, might work his way into the conversation. Fitzgerald, however, has played more than one quarterback in the past. Despite just two returning starters, the offensive line has experience.

Northwestern's first priority on defense is to generate a pass rush. The Wildcats finished last in the Big Ten with just 17 sacks, and senior end Dean Lowry returns as the team leader with 4.0. The linebackers will need to grow up fast after losing leading tackler Chi Chi Ariguzo to graduation. Senior cornerback Nick VanHoose anchors the secondary.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Anthony Walker, LB

Two attributes make Walker stand out: outstanding speed and high-level intelligence. The 225-pound sophomore linebacker, who compiled a 4.7 grade-point average and ran the 40-yard dash in 4.48 seconds in high school, showed both in his first start last year. In a 29-6 win over Penn State, he led the team with eight tackles and baited Nittany Lions quarterback Christian Hackenberg to throw an errant pass that Walker intercepted and returned 49 yards for a touchdown.

BOTTOM LINE

Northwestern dug an 0-2 hole last season, and the nonconference schedule won't be easy. "Smart school" pride is on the line in the home opener against Stanford and a road trip to Duke two weeks later.

The season could flip for better or worse at Michigan on Oct. 10. Northwestern has lost four straight to the Wolverines, including two overtime thrillers (2012-13) and last year's game when Fitzgerald opted to go for two at the end of regulation in a 10-9 loss. Road trips to Nebraska (Oct. 24) and Wisconsin (Nov. 21) won't be easy.

The Wildcats are a wild card in the Big Ten West, but Fitzgerald's first goal is to get Northwestern back in a bowl.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Stanford	
S.12	Eastern Illinois	
S.19	@DUKE	
S.26	Ball State	
O.3	Minnesota	17-24
O.10	@MICHIGAN	9-10
O.17	Iowa	7-48
O.24	@NEBRASKA	17-38
N.7	Penn State	29-6
N.14	Purdue	38-14
N.21	@WISCONSIN	20-14
N.28	Illinois (at Chicago, Ill.)	33-47

COACH

Pat Fitzgerald
10th year (60-53)
Career record: 60-53

Offensive coordinator: Mick McCall (eighth year)
Defensive coordinator: Mike Hankwitz (eighth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 5-7
Stadium: Ryan Field (47,130)
Tickets: 888-GO-PURPLE
Site: Evanston, Ill.
Website: nusports.com
Twitter: @NUFBFamily

WALKER: NAMY. HUH / AP

ILLINOIS

FIGHTING ILLINI

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **6**

Big Ten - West

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	Kent State	
S.12	Western Illinois	
S.19	@NORTH CAROLINA	
S.26	Middle Tennessee	
O.3	Nebraska	14-45
O.10	@IOWA	14-30
O.24	Wisconsin	28-38
O.31	@PENN STATE	16-14
N.7	@PURDUE	27-38
N.14	Ohio State	14-55
N.21	@MINNESOTA	28-24
N.28	Northwestern (at Chicago, Ill.)	47-33

COACH

Tim Beckman
Fourth year (12-25)
Career record: 33-41

Offensive coordinator: Bill Cubit (third year)
Defensive coordinators: Tim Banks (fourth year) and Mike Phair (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to Louisiana Tech in the Heart of Dallas Bowl, 35-18)
Stadium: Memorial Stadium (60,670)
Tickets: 866-ILLINI-1
Site: Champaign, Ill.
Website: fightingillini.com
Twitter: @IlliniFootball

Mike Dudek

There's a hint of optimism heading into coach Tim Beckman's fourth season at Illinois, but the results must follow.

The Illini did slip into the postseason in 2014 after winning their last two regular-season games before losing 35-18 to Louisiana Tech in the Heart of Dallas Bowl.

There has been progress in each of Beckman's seasons, and that's come with an increase of two wins each year. Yet the reality is Illinois hasn't beaten a ranked Big Ten team since upsetting No. 1 Ohio State on Nov. 10, 2007.

Quarterback Wes Lunt enjoyed a hot start last season before suffering a broken leg in a loss to Purdue. If Lunt stays healthy, then he has several returning skill-position players to work with. Illinois' leading rusher Josh Ferguson (807 yards, 8 TDs) averaged 5.0 yards per carry. Second-team All-Big Ten receiver Mike Dudek (1,038 yards, 6 TDs) suffered a torn ACL in spring practice but is expected back by midseason. At that point, he and Geronimo Allison (598 yards, 5 TDs) will form a viable one-two punch in the receiving game. Illinois should be able to put points on the board again.

But can Illinois stop anybody? The Illini gave up a Big Ten-worst 34.0 points per game last season, a problem seven returning starters aim to fix. Tim Banks and Mike Phair will share the duties as defensive coordinator this season, and there's talent on that side to work with. Linebacker Mason Monheim led Illinois with 111 tackles in 2014, and end Jihad Ward and cornerback V'Angelo Bentley were honorable mention All-Big Ten selections.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Mike Dudek, WR

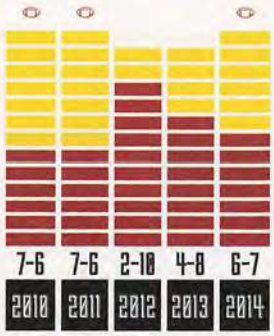
Dudek came to Champaign in January 2014 fresh off his senior season at Neuqua Valley High in Naperville, Ill. By the fall he was the Fighting Illini's top pass catcher in a receiving corps filled with upperclassmen. He received high praise in the offseason for the great athleticism he has tucked into his 5-11, 185-pound frame, and from his attention to detail in running sharp routes. Those skills should help him best his 76-catch, 1,038-yard freshman campaign.

BOTTOM LINE

Looking at 2015 again requires a glass-half-full approach. The Illini have a negotiable nonconference schedule, the lone test a road trip to North Carolina on Sept. 19. The three toughest Big Ten games are at home against Nebraska (Oct. 3), Wisconsin (Oct. 24) and Ohio State (Nov. 14), and the only back-to-back road games are at Penn State (Oct. 31) and Purdue (Nov. 7).

Illinois closes the season at Soldier Field in the rivalry game against Northwestern, a matchup that could once again determine whether or not the Illini advance to the postseason.

5-YEAR RECORD 26-37



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

- **QB** Wes Lunt (6-5, 225, Jr.)
- **RB** Josh Ferguson (5-10, 195, Sr.)
- **LT** Austin Schmidt (6-6, 295, Jr.)
- **LG** Nick Allegretti (6-4, 305, Fr.)
- **C** Joe Spencer (6-4, 300, Jr.)
- **RG** Ted Karras (6-4, 310, Sr.)
- **RT** Christian DiLauro (6-5, 295, So.)
- **TE** Andrew Davis (6-6, 225, Jr.)
- **WR** Mike Dudek (5-11, 185, So.)
- **WR** Malik Turner (6-3, 205, So.)
- **WR** Geronimo Allison (6-4, 195, Sr.)

DEFENSE

- **DE** Jihad Ward (6-6, 295, Sr.)
- **DT** Teko Powell (6-3, 305, Jr.)
- **DT** Rob Bain (6-3, 305, Jr.)
- **LB** Dawuane Smoot (6-3, 270, Jr.)
- **LB** Eric Finney (6-0, 220, Sr.)
- **LB** T.J. Neal (6-1, 235, Jr.)
- **LB** Mason Monheim (6-1, 235, Sr.)
- **CB** V'Angelo Bentley (5-10, 190, Sr.)
- **CB** Eaton Spence (6-0, 185, Sr.)
- **FS** Taylor Barton (6-1, 215, Jr.)
- **SS** Clayton Fejedelem (6-1, 195, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

- **K** Taylor Zalewski (6-3, 220, Sr.)
- **P** Ryan Frain (6-2, 220, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

- **Gabe Megginson**, OL ★★★★
- **Ke'Shawn Vaughn**, RB ★★★★
- **Dre Brown**, RB ★★★

The Illini signed 24 this recruiting cycle with a heavy emphasis coming on the offensive side of the football. Both incoming running backs, Ke'Shawn Vaughn and Dre Brown, should see the field, while juco standout Andrew Davis should start at tight end. Illinois beat out several powerhouse programs for in-state offensive tackle Gabe Megginson, the headliner of a class that includes six offensive linemen.

DUDEK: BRADLEY LEEB/AP

PURDUE
BOILERMAKERS

Big Ten – West

5-YEAR RECORD 21-41

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Austin Appleby (6-5, 229, Jr.)
RB Keyante Green (5-9, 219, So.)
LT David Hedelin (6-4, 298, Sr.)
LG Jason King (6-4, 305, Jr.)
C Robert Kugler (6-3, 294, Sr.)
RG Jordan Roos (6-4, 312, Jr.)
RT J.J. Prince (6-6, 297, Jr.)
TE Jordan Jurasevich (6-3, 250, Sr.)
WR Gregory Phillips (6-0, 191, So.)
WR Trae Hart (5-10, 168, So.)
WR Danny Anthrop (6-0, 191, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Evan Panfil (6-5, 262, Jr.)
DT Jake Replogle (6-5, 275, Jr.)
NT Ra'Zahn Howard (6-3, 310, Jr.)
DE Gelen Robinson (6-1, 250, So.)
OLB Danny Ezechukwu (6-2, 246, So.)
MLB Jimmy Herman (6-4, 230, Jr.)
OLB Ja'Whaun Bentley (6-2, 260, So.)
CB Anthony Brown (5-11, 190, Sr.)
CB Brandon Roberts (5-11, 198, So.)
FS Robert Gregory (6-1, 216, Jr.)
SS Frankie Williams (5-9, 190, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Paul Griggs (6-1, 196, Sr.)
P Thomas Meadows (6-0, 182, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

1. **Elijah Sindelar,** QB ★★★
2. **Matt McCann,** OL ★★★
3. **Anthony Mahoungou,** WR ★★★

The Boilermakers, who are bringing in 26 players in this class, are definitely upgrading at linebacker with the addition of Wyatt Cook and Markus Bailey. Continuing to get better at the point of attack was another emphasis, with offensive linemen Matt McCann and Larry Wells being nice additions and defensive end Chazmyn Turner one of the better recruiting "finds" in the Big Ten.

Jake Replogle

What ever happened to Purdue?

It's a fair question. Since Joe Tiller retired as coach in 2008, the Boilermakers have had just one winning season, and Darrell Hazell enters his third year with a 4-20 record. Purdue has won just one Big Ten game the last two seasons, and the Boilermakers failed to score 20 points in their last four games of 2014.

Purdue's strength is the running game; it ranked sixth in the Big Ten with 4.7 yards per carry last season, but running backs Akeem Hunt and Raheem Mostert are gone. Sophomore Keyante Green averaged 7.4 yards per carry in limited action. He'll get the first chance to carry the workload.

Hazell will have to settle on a quarterback; Austin Appleby and Danny Etling combined for 16 TDs and 16 interceptions last season. Wideout Danny Anthrop, who averaged 16.2 yards per catch with four TDs last season, is the best bet in the passing game. Purdue also returns three starters on the offensive line, led by senior center Robert Kugler, who could emerge as an All-Big Ten pick.

The defense returns seven starters, but it's still a unit that allowed 31.7 points and 416 yards per game last season. Tackle Jake Replogle enjoyed a breakout season with 10.5 tackles for a loss in 2014. Second-team All-Big Ten safety Frankie Williams led the secondary with three interceptions.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Jake Replogle, DT

Replogle didn't receive any all-conference honors last season, but the 6-5, 275-pound Centerville, Ohio, product broke through lines for 10.5 tackles for loss and 3.0 sacks last season—as a sophomore. He returns for his junior year as the Boilermakers' most dependable playmaker on defense and a potential candidate for all-conference recognition.

BOTTOM LINE

The early-season schedule is tricky with a trip to Marshall (Sept. 6) and incoming Virginia Tech (Sept. 19) before the Big Ten opener at Michigan State (Oct. 3). It's going to be a challenge to build momentum with that slate.

How Purdue navigates that could determine whether or not they get back to the postseason, which should be Hazell's top priority. The Boilers need to settle on a quarterback and a get a few more stops on defense. Otherwise, fans might be asking a different question: Who is going to be the next coach?

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **7**

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.6	@ MARSHALL	
S.12	Indiana State	
S.19	Virginia Tech	
S.26	Bowling Green	
O.3	@ MICHIGAN STATE	31-45
O.10	Minnesota	38-39
O.17	@ WISCONSIN	16-34
O.31	Nebraska	14-35
N.7	Illinois	38-27
N.14	@ NORTHWESTERN	14-38
N.21	@ IOWA	10-24
N.28	Indiana	16-23

COACH

Darrell Hazell
Third year (4-20)
Career record: 20-30

Offensive coordinator: John Shoop (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Greg Hudson (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: Ross-Ade Stadium (62,500)
Tickets: 800-497-7678
Site: West Lafayette, Ind.
Website: purduesports.com
Twitter: @BoilerFootball

REPLOGLE: NATI HARNIK/AP

PROJECTED FINISH

1. **TCU**
   Bowl Projection: CFP Semifinals (Cotton Bowl)
2. **Baylor**
   Bowl Projection: Sugar Bowl
3. **Oklahoma**
   Bowl Projection: Alamo Bowl
4. **Texas**
   Bowl Projection: Russell Athletic Bowl
5. **Kansas State**
   Bowl Projection: Texas Bowl
6. **Oklahoma State**
   Bowl Projection: Liberty Bowl
7. **West Virginia**
   Bowl Projection: Cactus Bowl
8. **Texas Tech**
9. **Iowa State**
10. **Kansas**

Samaje Perine, RB, Oklahoma

Big XII commissioner Bob Bowlsby presents Art Briles with Baylor's 2014 co-championship trophy.

Big 12 seeks more respect despite lack of championship game

BY BLAIR KERKHOFF | *Kansas City Star*

Not often does Big 12 football make news during the league's men's basketball tournament, but this year was the exception.

The athletic directors met and agreed that the slogan used to promote the conference's "One True Champion" would be applied literally going forward.

That means, in the event of a tie, the Big 12 would acknowledge the head-to-head result in identifying a champion.

This decision came after Baylor and TCU finished last year with 8-1 records in the Big 12 and were declared co-champions. On the final day of the season and with both teams playing home games, commissioner Bob Bowlsby handed one trophy to the Horned Frogs in Fort Worth, then drove to Waco and handed another trophy to the Bears.

Baylor's lone loss was to West Virginia. But the Bears beat TCU, and coach Art Briles believes no clear signal from the league regarding a champion hurt Baylor's chances with the College Football Playoff selection committee.

The committee said that wasn't the case, that Ohio State snagged the fourth and final spot on merit, but that didn't stop the Big 12 from taking action.

In a related offseason move, the Big 12 supported legislation to eliminate the minimum requirement of 12 teams to hold a football conference championship game. The league has no plans to start a title game, but it wanted the flexibility.

On the field, the same teams that finished with identical regular-season records look like the favorites this year. TCU returns starting quarterback Trevone Boykin and much offensive firepower while plugging some holes on defense.

Baylor has more returning starters but lost record-setting quarterback Bryce Petty. And the Bears must travel to Fort Worth to play the Horned Frogs this season.

The league's only new coach is David Beaty at Kansas, who had previously served as a Jayhawks assistant and comes to Lawrence from the Texas A&M staff. Including Clint Bowen, who finished last year as the interim head coach, Kansas has its fifth head coach in seven seasons.

BOWLSBY, BOYKIN: TONY GUTIERREZ / AP; PERINE: JOHN RAOUX / AP; OAKMAN: CHARLIE NEIBERGALL / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 Baylor-TCU is the new Texas-Oklahoma. In the 12-team era of the Big 12, the Red River rivalry defined the conference. But Frogs-Bears was the can't miss game last year, and so it appears this season.

2015 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Kevin Flahery, 247Sports

247 SPORTS COMPOSITE

RANK	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	POINTS
1	Texas	29	1	13	14	272.52
2	Oklahoma	24	0	10	14	248.23
3	Texas Tech	20	0	5	11	200.68
4	West Virginia	21	0	3	17	197.22
5	Baylor	19	0	3	14	195.58
6	Oklahoma State	21	0	3	17	192.06
7	TCU	21	0	1	20	187.54
8	Kansas State	22	0	0	18	173.16
9	Iowa State	22	0	0	16	158.79
10	Kansas	26	0	0	16	151.09

ALL-BIG XII

OFFENSE

- **QB** Trevone Boykin, Sr., TCU
- **RB** Shock Linwood, Jr., Baylor
- **RB** Samaje Perine, So., Oklahoma
- **OL** Spencer Drango, Sr., Baylor
- **OL** Le'Raven Clark, Sr., Texas Tech
- **OL** Tyler Orlosky, Jr., West Virginia
- **OL** Cody Whitehair, Sr., Kansas State
- **OL** Halapoulivaati Vaitai, Sr., TCU
- **TE/FB** Glenn Gronkowski, Jr., Kansas State
- **WR** KD Cannon, So., Baylor
- **WR** Josh Doctson, Sr., TCU

DEFENSE

- **DL** Emmanuel Ogbah, Jr., Oklahoma State
- **DL** Shawn Oakman, Sr., Baylor
- **DL** Andrew Billings, Jr., Baylor
- **DL** James McFarland, Sr., TCU
- **LB** Eric Striker, Sr., Oklahoma
- **LB** Pete Robertson, Sr., Texas Tech
- **LB** Nick Kwiatkoski, Sr., West Virginia
- **DB** Zack Sanchez, Jr., Oklahoma
- **DB** Nigel Tribune, Jr., Iowa State
- **DB** Karl Joseph, Sr., West Virginia
- **DB** Dante Barnett, Sr., Kansas State

SPECIALISTS

- **K** Josh Lambert, So., West Virginia
- **P** Taylor Symmank, Sr., Texas Tech

Trevone Boykin

PRESEASON MVP

Horned Frogs have always been solid on defense. Boykin makes them the league's most well-rounded team.

OVERRATED

TEXAS

There is no obvious all-conference candidate on the Longhorns but they seem to have the benefit of the doubt, every year.

UNDERRATED

KANSAS STATE

Starting over at quarterback usually means a dip for the Wildcats and it may this year, but there is plenty of talent—plus coach Bill Snyder.

2 Bear of a QB. It's to the point where you trust the next Baylor quarterback to be good, from Robert Griffin III to Nick Florence to Bryce Petty and now Seth Russell.

3 Re-Cycloning. Iowa State's Paul Rhoads is probably the Big 12 coach on the hot seat, but a senior QB, good receivers and secondary give the Cyclones a chance to get back to a bowl game.

Shawn Oakman, DE, Baylor

RATING THE BIG XII

FASTEST RECEIVER
K.D. Cannon, Baylor
As in "shot from a ... "

BEST HANDS
Sterling Shepard, WR, Oklahoma
Averaged 19 yards per reception last season.

BEST PASSING QB
Pat Mahomes, Texas Tech
When last seen, he passed for 598 yards and six touchdowns against Baylor.

BEST RUNNING QB
Trevone Boykin, TCU
Of his 4,608 yards of total offense last year, 707 came on the ground.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Samaje Perine, Oklahoma
Especially against Kansas in NCAA rushing-record fashion.

BEST INSTINCTS
Emmanuel Ogbah, DE, Oklahoma State
He knows how to get into a backfield (17 tackles for loss last season).

BEST ATHLETE
Shawn Oakman, DE, Baylor
He's a 6-9, 280-pound freak of a D-end who runs the 40 in 4.8.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED (OFF THE FIELD)
Glenn Gronkowski, FB, Kansas State
Yes, there's plenty of NFL experience in the family, but Glenn has made a name for himself on and off the field. The youngest of five "Gronk" brothers is a 4.0 student majoring in Business Marketing.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Josh Lambert, K, West Virginia
Close games don't matter. Lambert is a money kicker.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Spencer Drango, OT, Baylor
Among the best blind-side protectors in college football.

TOP IMPACT FROSH
Malik Jefferson, LB, Texas
Will play the stand-up hybrid position to take advantage of his skills.

HARDEST HITTER
Eric Striker, LB, Oklahoma
Appropriately named. What more needs to be written?

BEST PASS RUSHER
Shawn Oakman, DE, Baylor
The Big 12's sack-meister had 10 last season.

BEST INTERVIEW
Paul Rhoads, head coach, Iowa State
Tells it like it is, even when things go against Cyclones.

BEST COACH AS STRATEGIST
Bill Snyder, Kansas State
The master of the adjustment.

BEST COACH AS RECRUITER
Brian Jean-Mary, assistant, Texas
He was the lead recruiter on the league's only five-star recruit, Malik Jefferson.

BEST VENUE
McLane Stadium, Baylor
Bears went from little home-field edge to major one with new digs.

TCU
HORNED FROGS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 2

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 1

Derrick Kindred

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	@ MINNESOTA	30-7
S.12	Stephen F. Austin	
S.19	SMU	56-0
S.26	@ TEXAS TECH	82-27
O.3	Texas	48-10
O.10	@ KANSAS STATE	41-20
O.17	@ IOWA STATE	55-3
O.29	West Virginia	31-30
N.7	@ OKLAHOMA STATE	42-9
N.14	Kansas	34-30
N.21	@ OKLAHOMA	37-33
N.27	Baylor	58-61

COACH
Gary Patterson
15th year (132-45)
Career record: 132-45

Offensive coordinators:
Sonny Cumbie (second year)
Doug Meacham (second year)
Defensive coordinators:
DeMontie Cross (first year)
Chad Glasgow (first year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 12-1
(Beat Ole Miss in the Peach Bowl, 42-3)
Stadium: Amon G. Carter Stadium (45,000)
Tickets: 877-828-3764
Site: Fort Worth, Texas
Website: gofrogs.com
Twitter: @TCUFootball

The big loser in the inaugural College Football Playoff was the team that lost one game by three points, and held a 21-point fourth-quarter lead on that day.

Somehow, TCU dropped from third to sixth in the final College Football Playoff ranking. On a day the Horned Frogs defeated Iowa State 55-3, they got passed by in the only ranking that matters.

This meant a spot in the Chick-Fil-A Peach Bowl against Ole Miss instead of a place on college football's first bracket. Coach Gary Patterson could have kicked up a fuss or wrote a country music song about the snub.

Instead, Patterson thanked all the right people and said all the right things.

"I knew that if I didn't handle it right, then my team wouldn't play well and our fans wouldn't handle it right," Patterson recalls. "We needed to be on the positive side. We just needed to move forward."

It helps explain why TCU obliterated Ole Miss 42-3 in the bowl game, which sets the stage for the highest expectations in program history as the 2015 season approaches.

The Frogs will likely be the Big 12 favorite based on the firepower they have returning on offense with 10 starters, including quarterback Trevone Boykin.

He started last season as something of a question mark, based partly on his performance as an understudy for starter Casey Pachall, and because he could easily have lined up at wide receiver. That's where Boykin opened the 2013 season and caught 26 passes.

When TCU signed Texas A&M transfer Matt Joeckel, it seemed Boykin was headed back to wideout. But Boykin won the job and became Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year after leading the league in total offense (363 yards per game) by a wide margin.

Again this season, Boykin has a wealth of offensive talent as his disposal. Wide receiver Josh Doctson set the school's single-season receiving record with 1,018 yards. He broke his hand in the spring but should be ready to go in the fall. Doctson will be joined by Kolby Listenbee, a track star who has run the 100

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Derrick Kindred, S

Kindred is one of the few holdovers from a 2014 TCU defense that accumulated 40 sacks and 26 interceptions and had six players record more than 50 tackles. He was one of the top performers on the Frog defense with 80 tackles (third best on the team) and four interceptions (second), one of which he returned for a touchdown. Kindred's abilities to defend the deep pass, cut off big gains and make plays with the ball will help the Horned Frogs, who were four points away from a perfect season, duplicate their 2014 success.

KINDRED: LM OTERO / AP

meters in 10.23 seconds, and had 12 receptions of 30 or more yards last year.

Aaron Green is the team's top running back. He didn't become a starter until the second half of the season and finished with 922 yards and nine touchdowns.

Center Joey Hunt and Halapoulivaati Vaitai, who will move from right to left tackle this season, anchor what should be one of the Big 12's top offensive lines.

The Frogs' bigger questions are on defense, and it starts at linebacker where All-American Paul Dawson must be replaced.

During spring practice, Patterson was generally unhappy with the progress of the linebackers and his defensive line, which returns three of its four starters.

"We have a long way to go," Patterson said. It was just a couple of practices, but Patterson has high expectations for this team. He also tends to fret over his defenses more, with proven results.

Last season, TCU ranked among the top 10 nationally in most major defensive categories. The Frogs have the nation's longest streak of consecutive games with at least one pick and one sack (15) and the longest streak with a takeaway (25).

Since 2000, when Patterson took over as head coach, TCU has the nation's top rushing defense, allowing an average of 94.8 yards per game. Alabama and Ohio State are next.

Patterson owns the fourth-best winning percentage (74.6) among active coaches, and since 2005 TCU has college football's fifth-best record.

His name will continue to come up for openings at larger-budget schools, and he'll probably continue to turn down those offers. He signed a contract extension after last season that Frogs athletic director Chris Del Conte said takes care of Patterson "through the decade."

After a terrific 2014 season and the way Patterson conducted business in the face of a bitter disappointment, reworking the contract was a wise move.

BOTTOM LINE

The Frogs were minutes away from being undefeated last season. They won't forget how that felt and have a great chance to close the deal this year.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TCU does a better job of identifying in-state talent early than just about anybody. And that paid off in landing Awolope, one of Texas's hottest prospects by year's end, and linebackers like Alec Dunham (6-0, 210 pounds) and Mike Freeze (6-2, 215). TCU's class might have ranked No. 41 nationally and No. 7 in the Big 12, but the Horned Frogs landed plenty of high-potential players like 6-6 defensive end Tipa Galeai and sleeper athlete Arico Evans (6-1, 190), who could become a big-time safety. The Frogs went into Louisiana for top recruit Raymond, a great addition to a young secondary.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Deshawn Raymond, CB ★★★★
2. Breylin Mitchell, DE ★★★
3. Sam Awolope, OT ★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Trevone Boykin	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	13	145.9	301-492-10	61.2	3901	33	300.1

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Aaron Green	13	129	922	7.1	9	70.9

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Josh Doctson	13	65	1018	15.7	11	78.3

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Derrick Kindred	13	63	17	80

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
James McFarland	13	7.0	38

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Derrick Kindred	4	80	20.0	1

BEHIND THE MASK

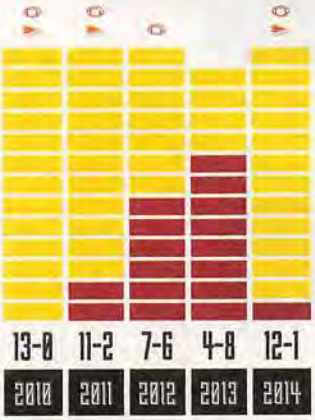
The Horned Frog made its way onto the TCU seal in 1915, but it wasn't until after World War II that the costumed version was introduced. In 1979, the mascot was renamed from "Addy the All-American Frog" to **"Superfrog,"** and he can now be found at numerous TCU events.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	TCU	OPP
SCORING	604	247
Points Per Game	46.5	19.0
FIRST DOWNS	331	218
Rushing	139	86
Passing	173	119
Penalty	19	13
RUSHING YARDAGE	2689	1414
Yards gained rushing	2987	1854
Yards lost rushing	298	440
Rushing Attempts	509	508
Average Per Rush	5.3	2.8
Average Per Game	206.8	108.8
TDs Rushing	32	9
PASSING YARDAGE	4240	3029
Comp-Att-Int	325-529-11	216-445-26
Average Per Pass	8.0	6.8
Average Per Catch	13.0	14.0
Average Per Game	326.2	233.0
TDs Passing	37	17
TOTAL OFFENSE	6929	4443
Total Plays	1038	953
Average Per Play	6.7	4.7
Average Per Game	533.0	341.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	34-735	57-1151
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	35-345	8--9
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	26-378	11-99
KICK RETURN AVG.	21.6	20.2
PUNT RETURN AVG.	9.9	-1.1
INT RETURN AVG.	14.5	9.0
FUMBLES-LOST	25-11	25-14
PENALTIES-YARDS	82-752	71-650
Average Per Game	57.8	50.0
PUNTS-YARDS	64-2507	100-4329
Average Per Punt	39.2	43.3
Net punt average	37.8	38.2
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:37	29:23
3RD-DOWN CONV.	85/197	61/219
3rd-Down Pct.	43%	28%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	7/14	12/22
4th-Down Pct.	50%	55%
SACKS BY-YARDS	40-238	23-120
MISC YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	77	28
FG-ATTEMPTS	22-27	17-18
ATTENDANCE	313036	258471
Games/Avg Per Game	7/44719	5/51694
Neutral Site Games		1/65706

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
TCU	173	122	196	113	0	604
Opponent	70	56	59	62	0	247

5-YEAR RECORD 47-17



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Trevone Boykin (6-2, 205, Sr.)
	Bram Kohlhausen (6-2, 203, Sr.)
TB	Aaron Green (5-11, 202, Sr.)
	Kyle Hicks (5-10, 200, So.)
LT	Halapoulivaati Vaitai (6-6, 308, Sr.)
	Aviante Collins (6-6, 295, Sr.)
LG	Jamelle Naff (6-4, 325, Sr.)
	Bobby Thompson (6-6, 310, Sr.)
C	Joey Hunt (6-3, 295, Sr.)
	Austin Schlottman (6-6, 300, So.)
RG	Brady Foltz (6-4, 320, Sr.)
	Matt Pryor (6-7, 350, So.)
RT	Joseph Noteboom (6-5, 310, So.)
	Matt Pryor (6-7, 350, So.)
TE	Buck Jones (6-4, 255, Jr.)
	Dominic Merka (6-4, 230, Sr.)
WR	Kolby Listenbee (6-1, 183, Sr.)
	Emanuel Porter (6-4, 210, So.)
WR	Deante' Gray (5-10, 175, Sr.)
	Desmon White (5-7, 150, So.)
WR	Josh Doctson (6-3, 195, Sr.)
	Ja'Juan Story (6-4, 208, Sr.)

DEFENSE

LE	Josh Carraway (6-4, 250, Jr.)
	James McFarland (6-3, 248, Sr.)
DT	Tevin Lawson (6-4, 280, Jr.)
	Aaron Curry (6-2, 280, Jr.)
DT	Davion Pierson (6-2, 305, Sr.)
	Chris Bradley (6-2, 255, So.)
RE	Terrell Lathan (6-5, 280, Sr.)
	Mike Tuaua (6-3, 253, Sr.)
LB	Ty Summers (6-2, 230, Fr.)
	Mike Freeze (6-3, 220, Fr.)
LB	Sammy Douglas (6-3, 215, Jr.)
	Paul Whitmill (6-0, 230, So.)
CB	Ranthony Texada (5-10, 170, So.)
	Torrance Mosley (5-10, 160, So.)
CB	Cameron Echols-Luper (6-0, 190, Jr.)
	Corry O'Meally (6-0, 170, Sr.)
FS	Derrick Kindred (5-10, 210, Sr.)
	Nick Orr (5-10, 166, So.)
SS	Denzel Johnson (6-2, 205, Jr.)
	Travin Howard (6-1, 190, So.)
WS	Kenny Iloka (6-2, 209, Sr.)
	Ridwan Issahaku (6-1, 180, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Jaden Oberkrom (6-3, 187, Sr.)
P	Ethan Perry (6-4, 230, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Big XII

MASCOT: BRANDON WADE / AP

BAYLOR BEARS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 7

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 2

Shock Linwood

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	@SMU	45-0
S.12	Lamar	
S.26	Rice	
O.3	Texas Tech (at Arlington, TX)	48-46
O.10	@KANSAS	60-14
O.17	West Virginia	27-41
O.24	Iowa State	49-28
N.5	@KANSAS STATE	38-27
N.14	Oklahoma	48-14
N.21	@OKLAHOMA STATE	49-28
N.27	@TCU	61-58
D.5	Texas	28-7

COACH

Art Briles
Eighth year (55-34)
Career record: 89-62

Offensive coordinator: Kendal Briles (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Phil Bennett (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 11-2
(Lost to Michigan State in the Cotton Bowl, 42-41)
Stadium: McLane Stadium (45,140)
Tickets: 254-710-1000
Site: Waco, Texas
Website: baylorbears.com
Twitter: @BUFootball

Just after last season opened, Earl Santee sat in his office in Kansas City and spoke glowingly of his latest creation, Baylor's McLane Stadium.

"You have to have the right idea, the right leadership, the right financing, the right politics," said Santee, the stadium's designer for the architect firm Populous. "And all those moments have to happen concurrently."

So they did, at Baylor, and the result was a breathtaking $266 million structure that sits along the Brazos River. Santee had designed 18 Major League Baseball parks; McLane Stadium was his first major college football stadium.

"There is a purity to the experience that's different in college sports," Santee said. "College sports lives for tradition. There's a clear and clean sense of how a legacy lives on from generation to generation."

The Bears' first season in the new digs could not have been more memorable. Baylor swept its six home opponents on the way to winning its second straight Big 12 championship.

Final rankings of No. 7 in the AP poll and No. 8 in the coaches' poll were the best in school history.

Things could have gone better at the end. Baylor blew a three-touchdown, fourth-quarter lead in the Cotton Bowl and fell to Michigan State.

This after coach Art Briles openly groused about what he perceived as the Big 12's role, or lack of it, in promoting Baylor for the first College Football Playoff. The Bears finished fifth in the final CFP poll.

But the Bears should be knocking on the door once again. They're loaded with returning talent.

First, the question mark: Gone is productive quarterback Bryce Petty, along with his two-season totals of 8,055 yards and 61 touchdowns and remarkable 9.7 career yards per attempt. He threw for 550 yards in last season's bowl loss.

Enter Seth Russell, who has appeared in

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Shock Linwood, RB

Despite his flashy first name, Linwood's numbers are serious business. In Baylor's explosive offense, he provided the balance last year with 1,252 rushing yards (96.3 per game) and 16 rushing touchdowns (second in both categories in the Big 12). At 5-9 and 195 pounds, he combines natural elusiveness with surprising toughness and durability. With a new QB under center, 20 rushing TDs for Linwood wouldn't be a shock.

LINWOOD: CHARLIE NEIBERGALL / AP

15 career games and has 11 career touchdown passes. Russell has the full faith of the Bears, especially after a terrific spring.

That's about it for key positions without much experience. Baylor is loaded at the skill positions with running back Shock Linwood, who finished second in the Big 12 last year with 1,252 yards and 16 touchdowns.

Corey Coleman and KD Cannon give Baylor one of the nation's best one-two punches at wide receiver. Coleman was third in the Big 12 at 1,119 receiving yards with 11 touchdowns, and Cannon was second on the Bears with 1,030 yards on 58 receptions with eight touchdowns. Baylor is the only team in college football with two returning 1,000-yard wide receivers.

Helping ensure the Bears' offense has enough time to operate is left tackle Spencer Drango, one of the game's best on the blind side. Drango says he petitioned the NFL advisory committee about his status and was advised to return.

His announcement came a day after defensive end Shawn Oakman said he was returning. You may have noticed Oakman last season. At 6-9, how could you miss him? He was second in the Big 12 with 11 sacks in 2014.

Baylor's defensive line should be solid with tackle Beau Blackshear, who recorded 9.5 tackles for loss and 4.5 sacks last year, and the return of end Jamal Palmer. Palmer was off to a fast start last season before tearing his ACL, and two years ago he received votes for All-Big 12.

Another potential defensive star: linebacker Taylor Young, who finished second on the team in tackles with 92 and was voted the league's Defensive Freshman of the Year.

The secondary is where Baylor seeks the greatest improvement. The starters return, led by safety Orion Stewart, and it has to help that the group matches up against one of college football's best offenses in practice.

BOTTOM LINE

The Big 12 title came down to one game last season—Baylor's wild victory over TCU—but this year the matchup is at Fort Worth to close the November portion of the schedule that has the Bears on the road for three weeks and a home date with Oklahoma. Briles' team will know much more about its three-peat chances after that stretch.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Few teams in the country can boast a skill position haul like the trio of Stidham, Hasty and Lynch, all of whom came from the Lone Star State. The Bears had the Big 12's No. 5 class and the No. 37 national class, but didn't take a full 25. The players the Bears did land, like Stidham and Lynch, represent the future of the Bears' explosive offense, while junior-college offensive linemen like Dominic Desouza and Maurice Porter should factor in immediately. Athletes J.W. Ketchum and Tony Nicholson could have various fits, while cornerback Jordan Tolbert is a sleeper.

TOP SIGNEES

1. Jarrett Stidham, QB ★★★★
2. Blake Lynch, WR ★★★★
3. JaMycal Hasty, RB ★★★★

MASCOT: TONY GUTIERREZ / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Seth Russell	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	8	164.6	48-85-1	56.5	804	8	100.5

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Shock Linwood	13	251	1252	5.0	16	96.3

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Corey Coleman	10	64	1119	17.5	11	111.9

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Taylor Young	13	58	34	92

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Shawn Oakman	13	11.0	73

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Orion Stewart	4	68	17.0	0
Xavien Howard	4	40	10.0	0

BEHIND THE MASK

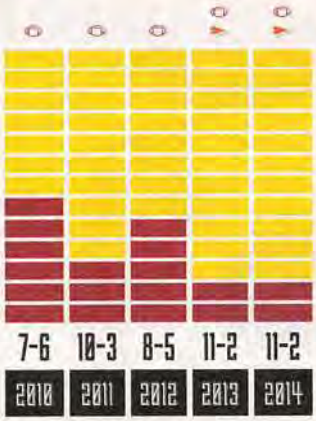
While Baylor has two live bears—Joy and Lady, each bearing the title of "Judge" to honor the first live mascot—on campus, **Bruiser** is the costumed version that was introduced during the 1981-82 basketball season.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	BAYLOR	OPP
SCORING	627	332
Points Per Game	48.2	25.5
FIRST DOWNS	391	256
Rushing	171	85
Passing	193	128
Penalty	27	43
RUSHING YARDAGE	2802	1530
Yards gained rushing	3077	1996
Yards lost rushing	275	466
Rushing Attempts	619	485
Average Per Rush	4.5	3.2
Average Per Game	215.5	117.7
TDs Rushing	43	17
PASSING YARDAGE	4757	3434
Comp-Att-Int	323-519-8	249-456-13
Average Per Pass	9.2	7.5
Average Per Catch	14.7	13.8
Average Per Game	365.9	264.2
TDs Passing	38	24
TOTAL OFFENSE	7559	4964
Total Plays	1138	941
Average Per Play	6.6	5.3
Average Per Game	581.5	381.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	40-801	81-1504
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	20-93	11-56
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	13-203	8-67
KICK RETURN AVG.	20.0	18.6
PUNT RETURN AVG.	4.7	5.1
INT RETURN AVG.	15.6	8.4
FUMBLES-LOST	16-5	25-13
PENALTIES-YARDS	127-1149	89-866
Average Per Game	88.4	66.6
PUNTS-YARDS	47-2040	82-3350
Average Per Punt	43.4	40.9
Net punt average	41.4	39.0
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:01	30:59
3RD-DOWN CONV.	100/213	81/210
3rd-Down Pct.	47%	39%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	25/34	6/24
4th-Down Pct.	74%	25%
SACKS BY-YARDS	37-276	24-152
MISC YARDS	65	39
TDS SCORED	82	43
FG-ATTEMPTS	18-26	11-14
ATTENDANCE	280257	316023
Games/Avg Per Game	6/46710	5/63205
Neutral Site Games		2/62822

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Baylor	196	175	149	107	0	627
Opponent	70	75	77	110	0	332

5-YEAR RECORD 47-18



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Seth Russell (6-3, 220, Jr.)
	Chris Johnson (6-5, 235, So.)
RB	Shock Linwood (5-9, 195, Jr.)
	Johnny Jefferson (5-10, 205, So.)
LT	Spencer Drango (6-6, 310, Sr.)
	Tanner Thrift (6-5, 305, So.)
LG	Blake Muir (6-6, 310, Sr.)
	Desmine Hilliard (6-5, 340, Sr.)
C	Kyle Fuller (6-5, 305, Jr.)
	Blake Blackmar 6-5, 340, Fr.)
RG	Jarell Broxton (6-5, 330, Sr.)
	Rami Hammad (6-4, 325, So.)
RT	Pat Colbert (6-6, 305, Sr.)
	Ishmael Wilson (6-4, 305, So.)
TE	Tre'Von Armstead (6-6, 270, Jr.) or
	LaQuan McGowan (6-7, 410, Sr.)
WR	Lynx Hawthorne (6-0, 200, Jr.)
	Davion Hall (6-2, 200, So.)
WR	K.D. Cannon (6-0, 175, So.)
	Chris Platt (5-11, 165, Fr.)
WR	Corey Coleman (5-11, 190, Jr.)
	Ishmael Zamora (6-4, 220, Fr.)

DEFENSE

RE	Shawn Oakman (6-9, 280, Sr.)
	Brian Nance (6-3, 230, So.)
NT	Andrew Billings (6-2, 300, Jr.)
	Andrew Morris (6-1, 270, Fr.)
DT	Beau Blackshear (6-4, 300, Sr.)
	Byron Bonds (6-2, 285, Jr.)
LE	Jamal Palmer (6-3, 240, Sr.)
	K.J. Smith (6-2, 255, So.)
WLB	Taylor Young (5-10, 225, So.)
	Aiavion Edwards (6-1, 225, Jr.)
MLB	Grant Campbell (6-1, 230, Sr.)
	Raaquan Davis (6-1, 220, So.)
NB	Travon Blanchard (6-1, 195, So.)
	Patrick Levels (5-10, 195, Jr.)
CB	Xavien Howard (6-2, 200, Jr.)
	Terrence Singleton (5-11, 195, Jr.)
CB	Ryan Reid (5-11, 190, Jr.)
	Tion Wright (5-9, 170, Jr.)
DS	Orion Stewart (6-2, 200, Jr.)
	Taion Sells (5-10, 185, Jr.)
CS	Terrell Burt (5-10, 185, Sr.)
	Chance Waz (5-11, 175, So.)

SPECIALISTS

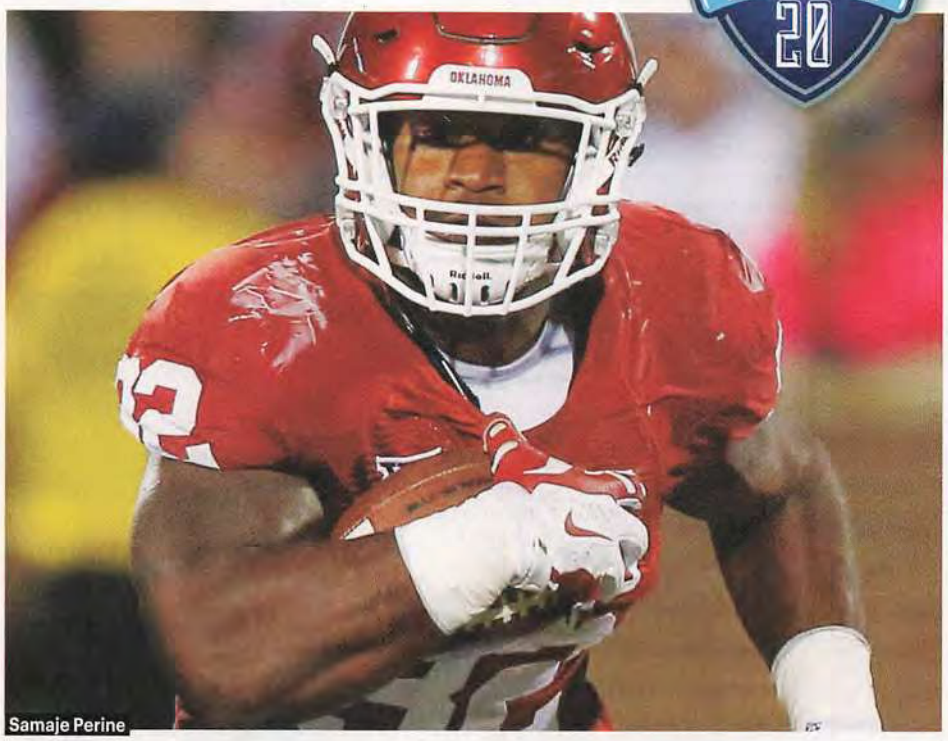
K	Chris Callahan (5-9, 185, So.)
P	Drew Galitz (5-11, 180, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

OKLAHOMA
SOONERS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 20

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 3


Samaje Perine

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Akron	
S.12	@ TENNESSEE	34-10
S.19	Tulsa	52-7
O.3	West Virginia	45-33
O.10	Texas (in Dallas, TX)	31-26
O.17	@ KANSAS STATE	30-31
O.24	Texas Tech	42-30
O.31	@ KANSAS	44-7
N.7	Iowa State	59-14
N.14	@ BAYLOR	14-48
N.21	TCU	33-37
N.28	@ OKLAHOMA STATE	35-38

COACH
Bob Stoops
17th year (168-44)
Career record: 168-44

Offensive coordinator: Lincoln Riley (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Mike Stoops (ninth year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Clemson in the Russell Athletic Bowl, 40-6)
Stadium: Gaylord Family-Oklahoma Memorial Stadium (82,112)
Tickets: 800-456-GoOU
Site: Norman, Okla.
Website: soonersports.com
Twitter: @OU_Football

It's one thing to be misread in the preseason the way TCU or Mississippi State were. They started from outside everybody's Top 25 and worked their way up the charts to outstanding seasons.

Oklahoma went the other way. A consensus preseason top-five pick, the Sooners faded to an 8-5 record, matching the most losses in a season during coach Bob Stoops' 16 years in Norman.

The final two hurt the most. Oklahoma was locked in a struggle with Oklahoma State but appeared safe until Tyreek Hill returned a punt 92 yards for a touchdown in the final minute. The Sooners had given Hill a second chance after the Cowboys had been called for a running-into-the-kicker penalty. The touchdown forced overtime, and OU lost on a field goal.

The bowl game was a disaster, a 40-6 embarrassment to Clemson. Only a garbage-time touchdown prevented a shutout. The changes came quickly. Offensive coordinators Jay Norvell and Josh Heupel were fired, and Lincoln Riley, who had led East Carolina's offense for the previous five seasons after spending seven years at Texas Tech, took over.

A week later, cornerbacks coach Bobby Jack Wright, a part of Stoops' original staff in 1999, retired, and later co-defensive coordinator Jerry Montgomery left to take a job with the Green Bay Packers. In all, four new coaches are part of the staff.

Riley's new offense will be something of a throwback to the "Air Raid" attack employed by the Sooners in the 2000s.

"We had so much success with it through the years, and just little by little here in the last several years we kind of slowly drifted away from it," Stoops said upon introducing Riley. "I had a goal in mind to get back to running that type of system."

That system produced two Heisman Trophy quarterbacks in Jason White and Sam Bradford. This year's top candidates include Trevor Knight, Baker Mayfield and Cody Thomas. They all have experience and all

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Samaje Perine, RB

As a freshman last year, Perine had Oklahoma's fifth-best all-time rushing season with 1,713 yards, besting such names as DeMarco Murray and 1969 Heisman winner Steve Owens. Also, Perine's 21 rushing touchdowns—six more than Adrian Peterson ever had in a season—were the fourth most in a single season in OU history. To top it all off, in a November game that Perine didn't even start, he set the FBS single-game rushing record with 427 yards.

PERINE: SUE OGROCKI / AP

believe they have something to prove.

Knight did not follow up on his stellar play in the previous year's Sugar Bowl victory over Alabama. He suffered a late-season injury that gave reps to Thomas. Knight returned for the bowl game and was never comfortable.

Mayfield could be the favorite. He sat out last season after transferring from Texas Tech–Riley said he tried to lure him to East Carolina–and in his first start for the Red Raiders passed for 413 yards and four touchdowns. He was named Big 12 Offensive Freshman of the Year for 2013.

Whoever takes snaps will have talent to work with. Samaje Perine rushed for 1,713 yards, an NCAA-record 427 of them against Kansas. Running back figures to be a deep position with Alex Ross (Big 12-leading kick-return average of 32.0 in 2014), Joe Mixon (suspended last year) and freshman Rodney Anderson.

The top receiving target is Sterling Shepard, who has 147 career receptions and 15 touchdowns.

A couple of All-America candidates, linebacker Eric Striker and cornerback Zack Sanchez, lead a unit that ranked second in the Big 12 in rushing defense (106.4 yards per game) but ranked toward the bottom in pass defense (276.2) and in the middle in sacks.

Oklahoma scored one big victory just after spring workouts commenced. That's when the racist OU fraternity video surfaced and quickly became national news.

Stoops canceled football practice for a week. He joined in a student demonstration the day after the video was released and gave his players leeway to handle the situation as they saw fit.

"There's no coaching manual for this," Stoops said. "It's a life issue more than anything when you're dealing with racism anywhere. It's bigger than sports, bigger than football."

Stoops and other Sooners coaches and athletes made a show of force to the public, and especially recruits, that such an action on the Norman campus is intolerable.

BOTTOM LINE

Not starting as the target might give Oklahoma a motivational edge. There's enough here to win the Big 12, which the Sooners haven't done outright since 2010.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Oklahoma had a disappointing defense last season and went out to shore up those issues, doing so with a national recruit in DeBerry, an international recruit (from Canada) in Gallimore and a cornerback from the heart of Texas in Mbanasor. The Big 12's No. 2 class and nation's No. 15 class also landed immediate help at wide receiver in junior college transfer Dede Westbrook and loaded up on defensive backs, taking six DBs 6-foot or taller. While most of the bigger gets were on defense, running back Rodney Anderson (5-1, 204 pounds) and offensive tackle Bobby Evans represent potential upgrades offensively.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATINGS

1 • **Neville Gallimore,** DT ★★★★
2 • **Ricky DeBerry,** LB ★★★★
3 • **PJ Mbanasor,** CB ★★★★

MASCOTS: SUE OGROCKI / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Trevor Knight	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	10	124.8	179-316-12	56.6	2300	14	230.0

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Samaje Perine	13	263	1713	6.5	21	131.8

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Sterling Shepard	12	51	970	19.0	5	80.8

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Dominique Alexander	13	48	59	107

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Eric Striker	13	9.0	48

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Zack Sanchez	6	43	7.2	1

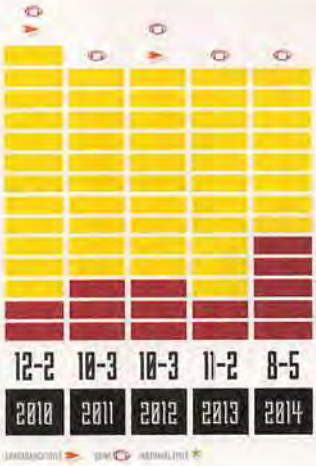
BEHIND THE SADDLES
The Sooner Schooner, introduced in 1964, is a covered wagon driven by **"Boomer"** and **"Sooner,"** a pair of white ponies who lead the charge after every Oklahoma score.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	OKLA	OPP
SCORING	473	337
Points Per Game	36.4	25.9
FIRST DOWNS	293	264
Rushing	161	86
Passing	118	155
Penalty	14	23
RUSHING YARDAGE	3395	1383
Yards gained rushing	3581	1758
Yards lost rushing	186	375
Rushing Attempts	557	458
Average Per Rush	6.1	3.0
Average Per Game	261.2	106.4
TDs Rushing	40	15
PASSING YARDAGE	2646	3591
Comp-Att-Int	210-386-17	267-510-12
Average Per Pass	6.9	7.0
Average Per Catch	12.6	12.5
Average Per Game	203.5	276.2
TDs Passing	17	23
TOTAL OFFENSE	6041	4974
Total Plays	943	968
Average Per Play	6.4	5.1
Average Per Game	464.7	382.6
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	37-840	26-554
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	15-87	17-181
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-191	17-239
KICK RETURN AVG.	22.7	21.3
PUNT RETURN AVG.	5.8	10.6
INT RETURN AVG.	15.9	14.1
FUMBLES-LOST	12-7	19-7
PENALTIES-YARDS	70-648	77-614
Average Per Game	49.8	47.2
PUNTS-YARDS	66-2763	89-3489
Average Per Punt	41.9	39.2
Net punt average	37.3	37.8
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:20	29:40
3RD-DOWN CONV.	72/178	82/214
3rd-Down Pct.	40%	38%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	9/15	9/17
4th-Down Pct.	60%	53%
SACKS BY-YARDS	32-204	9-58
MISC YARDS	36	0
TDS SCORED	62	43
FG-ATTEMPTS	13-18	14-18
ATTENDANCE	510972	248457
Games/Avg Per Game	6/85162	5/49691
Neutral Site Games		2/66086

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Oklahoma	138	134	117	87	0	473
Opponent	65	113	78	78	3	337

5-YEAR RECORD 51-15



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Trevor Knight (6-1, 206, Jr.)
	Baker Mayfield (6-2, 214, Jr.)
RB	Samaje Perine (5-11, 237, So.)
	Joe Mixon (6-2, 217, Fr.)
LT	Josiah St. John (6-6, 309, Sr.)
	Orlando Brown (6-8, 355, Fr.)
LG	Jamal Danley (6-5, 301, Jr.)
	Dylan Hartsook (6-5, 320, Jr.)
C	Ty Darlington (6-2, 299, Sr.)
	Jonathan Alvarez (6-3, 310, So.)
RG	Nila Kasitati (6-4, 315, Sr.)
	Alex Dalton (6-4, 297, Fr.)
RT	Derek Farniok (6-9, 345, Sr.)
	Sam Grant (6-7, 281, Jr.)
TE	Mark Andrews (6-6, 247, Fr.)
	Carson Meier (6-6, 244, Fr.)
WR	Durron Neal (5-11, 195, Sr.)
	Jeffery Mead (6-6, 189, So.)
WR	Sterling Shepard (5-10, 191, Sr.)
	John Humphrey (6-0, 160, Fr.)
WR	Dede Westbrook (6-1, 167, Jr.)
	K. J. Young (6-0, 177, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Charles Tapper (6-4, 283, Sr.)
	Dwayne Orso (6-6, 294, Fr.)
DT	Matthew Romar (6-0, 294, So.)
	Jordan Wade (6-4, 305, Jr.)
DE	Matt Dimon (6-2, 274, Jr.)
	Dwayne Orso (6-6, 294, Fr.)
LB	D.J. Ward (6-2, 251, So.)
	Charles Walker (6-2, 299, So.)
LB	Eric Striker (6-0, 223, Sr.)
	P.L. Lindley (6-2, 267, Sr.)
LB	Jordan Evans (6-3, 242, Jr.)
	Ruben Hunter (6-1, 217, So.)
LB	Dominique Alexander (6-0, 229, Jr.)
	Tay Evans (6-2, 235, Fr.)
CB	Dakota Austin (5-11, 160, Jr.)
	Jordan Thomas (6-1, 194, So.)
CB	Zack Sanchez (5-11, 175, Jr.)
	Stanvon Taylor (5-10, 174, Jr.)
FS	Ahmad Thomas (6-0, 218, Jr.)
	Hatari Byrd (6-1, 206, Jr.)
SS	Steven Parker (6-1, 201, So.)
	Cameron Cotton (5-11, 201, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Nick Hodgson (6-2, 198, Sr.)
P	Jack Steed (6-5, 209, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

TEXAS
LONGHORNS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

4

Dylan Haines

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@NOTRE DAME	
S.12	Rice	
S.19	California	
S.26	Oklahoma State	28-7
O.3	@TCU	10-48
O.10	Oklahoma (at Dallas, TX)	26-31
O.24	Kansas State	0-23
O.31	@IOWA STATE	48-45
N.7	Kansas	23-0
N.14	@WEST VIRGINIA	33-16
N.26	Texas Tech	34-13
D.5	@BAYLOR	7-28

COACH
Charlie Strong
Second year (6-7)
Career record: 43-23

Offensive coordinator: Joe Wickline (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Vance Bedford (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to Arkansas in the Texas Bowl, 31-7)
Stadium: Darrell K. Royal/Texas Memorial Stadium (100,119)
Tickets: 800-982-BEVO
Site: Austin, Texas
Website: texassports.com
Twitter: @Longhorn_FB

Charlie Strong's first season as the Texas coach probably wasn't what many had in mind, with a bowl loss dropping the overall record to 6-7.

But then, football at Texas since the Longhorns' appearance in the BCS National Championship Game after the 2009 season could not be envisioned by even their most-hated rivals.

Two losing final records, no double-digit-victory seasons after nine straight, 28 losses in five years, matching the worst five-year stretch since the 1930s, and no Big 12 finish higher than third.

Changes were made. Mack Brown replaced assistants and eventually he was replaced in favor of Strong, who wasn't satisfied with what he saw in his first season.

"I just felt like last year we didn't play together as team," Strong says. "In order to come together as a team, trust has to be built ... that's what we never did."

Is there a better sense of team chemistry this season?

Winning always helps in that department, and so does solid quarterback play, which Texas hasn't had since, well, 2009. The competition in the spring was between last year's starter, Tyrone Swoopes, and Jerrod Heard, and every indication was Swoopes was the leader.

Swoopes, who took over for David Ash (concussion) after one game last season, learned on the job as a sophomore, passing for 13 touchdowns and 11 interceptions. He didn't rank among the Big 12's top 10 in passer rating, and his and the Longhorns' effort in the final two games–a 38-point loss to TCU at home and 31-7 defeat to Arkansas in the postseason–was abysmal.

"I know it's the quarterback, but it's the offensive line, running backs and wide receivers, lots of things are happening," Strong says. "We have to build a confidence."

It will happen in an uptempo, spread offense that calls for more quarterback rollouts and quick hitters–and then racing

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Dylan Haines, S

A former walk-on, Haines redshirted in 2012 and spent 2013 on the scout team before earning a scholarship and cracking the lineup in 2014. His spot was hard-earned, so it's no wonder he played with such fury and focus, finishing third on the Longhorns last season in tackles behind graduated linebackers Jordan Hicks and Steve Edmond and tying for second in the conference with four interceptions.

HAINES: ERIC GAY / AP

back to the line to do it again. Last year, Texas ranked 90th nationally in plays per game at 68.6.

Plus, there were few explosive plays. Those are defined as at least 12 yards on a rushing play and 16 on a passing play. Among Big 12 teams, only Kansas had fewer of those than Texas last year.

Part of the problem was an injury-ravaged offensive line. There were days, like a 23-0 loss at Kansas State and 28-7 defeat to Baylor, along with the final two games, when nothing seemed to work offensively.

Strong says he still wants a physical team, but he understands the need to pick up the pace, not just because that's the prevailing wind in the conference but that style dominates Texas high school football.

"The key players that you need to really recruit, those guys are in the spread offense," Strong says.

A wild card in the offense is Kai Locksley, a freshman from Baltimore who originally committed to Florida State and won't be on campus until the summer. Strong says he'll be part of the competition.

Senior running back Johnathan Gray, who has amassed 2,118 yards and 14 touchdowns, is the most established of the returning skill players. Daje Johnson has the best big-play ability among the receivers.

The defense got Texas into a bowl game, playing well through a late-season stretch of victories over Texas Tech, West Virginia and Oklahoma State, with two of those coming on the road. The Longhorns led the Big 12 in passing defense, which matters greatly in the Big 12, and the secondary looks like the strongest part of this year's team even with the loss of all-league Quandre Diggs. The presumed leader of the unit is cornerback Duke Thomas.

How much improvement can be expected from the Longhorns? It appears to be a team without obvious all-conference-level talent, and Strong seems to realize that.

"I told our coaches, this probably is going to be one of those years where we're going to have to coach and we'll just see how good of a coaches we really are," Strong says. "It's great to have a challenge."

BOTTOM LINE

Since Colt McCoy was All-Big 12 in 2009, no Texas quarterback has received a vote for all-conference. That has to change for the Longhorns to be successful.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Charlie Strong's first class was a major hit, ranking first in the Big 12 and 10th nationally. Strong's strength is on defense, and the Longhorns hit it big with Texas' top two linebackers in Jefferson and Wheeler, while also landing Holton Hill (6-2 184 pounds), arguably the state's top cover corner. Texas also added to the offense by signing six linemen, a playmaker at running back in Chris Warren and high-potential receivers in John Burt and Ryan Newsome. Keep an eye on tight end Devonaire Clarington, who could be among the Big 12's best at his position early on.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1 • **Malik Jefferson,** LB ★★★★★
2 • **Anthony Wheeler,** LB ★★★★
3 • **Chris Warren,** RB ★★★★

MASCOT: ERIC GAY / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Tyrone Swoopes	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	13	116.5	224-384-11	58.3	2409	13	185.3

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Johnathan Gray	13	147	637	4.3	7	49.0

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Marcus Johnson	13	27	313	11.6	1	24.1

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Dylan Haines	13	52	34	86

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Hassan Ridgeway	13	6.0	48

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Dylan Haines	4	98	24.5	1

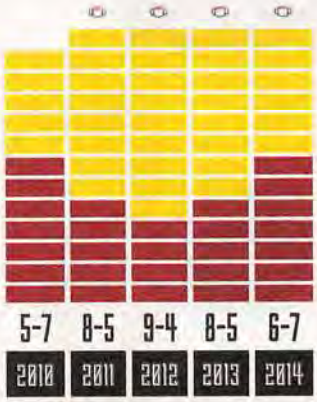
BEHIND THE HORNS
The first live Longhorn steer, Bo, appeared at halftime of the 1916 Texas-Texas A&M game. After the Longhorns won the game, *The Alcalde* editor, Ben Dyer, referred to the mascot as **Bevo**, although reasons why he chose the name are still unknown.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	TEXAS	OPP
SCORING	278	310
Points Per Game	21.4	23.8
FIRST DOWNS	232	251
Rushing	100	122
Passing	115	112
Penalty	17	17
RUSHING YARDAGE	1786	2136
Yards gained rushing	2174	2494
Yards lost rushing	388	358
Rushing Attempts	474	549
Average Per Rush	3.8	3.9
Average Per Game	137.4	164.3
TDs Rushing	18	17
PASSING YARDAGE	2599	2395
Comp-Att-Int	243-418-11	247-419-15
Average Per Pass	6.2	5.7
Average Per Catch	10.7	9.7
Average Per Game	199.9	184.2
TDs Passing	14	13
TOTAL OFFENSE	4385	4531
Total Plays	892	968
Average Per Play	4.9	4.7
Average Per Game	337.3	348.5
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	39-763	15-451
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	22-177	33-336
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	15-183	11-239
KICK RETURN AVG.	19.6	30.1
PUNT RETURN AVG.	8.0	10.2
INT RETURN AVG.	12.2	21.7
FUMBLES-LOST	22-14	16-7
PENALTIES-YARDS	77-664	71-655
Average Per Game	51.1	50.4
PUNTS-YARDS	87-3678	82-3334
Average Per Punt	42.3	40.7
Net punt average	37.7	37.3
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:45	30:15
3RD-DOWN CONV.	69/201	76/214
3rd-Down Pct.	34%	36%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	7/14	13/24
4th-Down Pct.	50%	54%
SACKS BY-YARDS	40-250	28-221
MISC YARDS	0	72
TDS SCORED	34	39
FG-ATTEMPTS	14-21	13-17
ATTENDANCE	564618	203239
Games/Avg Per Game	6/94103	4/50810
Neutral Site Games		3/74565

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Texas	53	102	23	100	0	278
Opponent	58	76	55	121	0	310

5-YEAR RECORD 36-28



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB Tyrone Swoopes (6-4, 248, Jr.)
Jerrod Heard (6-2, 200, Fr.)
TB Johnathan Gray (5-11, 206, Sr.)
D'Onta Foreman (6-2, 231, So.)
LT Marcus Hutchins (6-5, 284, Sr.)
Brandon Hodges (6-5, 307, Jr.)
LG Sedrick Flowers (6-3, 319, Sr.)
Terrell Cuney (6-1, 297, Fr.)
C Taylor Doyle (6-4, 303, Sr.)
Jake Raulerson (6-5, 295, So.)
RG Kent Perkins (6-5, 320, Jr.)
Elijah Rodriguez (6-3, 294, Fr.)
RT Connor Williams (6-5, 290, Fr.)
Tristan Nickelson (6-8, 317, So.)
TE Andrew Beck (6-3, 239, So.)
Blake Whiteley (6-5, 252, So.)
WR Jacorey Warrick (5-11, 172, Jr.)
Daje Johnson (5-10, 184, Sr.)
WR Marcus Johnson (6-1, 194, Sr.)
Armanti Foreman (6-0, 194, So.)
WR Dorian Leonard (6-3, 203, So.)
Lorenzo Joe (6-2, 202, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Shiro Davis (6-3, 265, Sr.)
Bryce Cottrell (6-2, 247, Jr.)
DT Hassan Ridgeway (6-4, 320, Jr.)
Desmond Jackson (6-0, 305, Sr.)
DT Poona Ford (5-11, 286, So.)
Paul Boyette Jr. (6-2, 296, Jr.)
DE Naashon Hughes (6-4, 230, So.)
Caleb Bluiett (6-3, 250, Jr.)
SLB Peter Jinkens (6-1, 236, Sr.)
Timothy Cole (6-1, 239, Jr.)
MLB Dalton Santos (6-3, 252, Sr.)
Malik Jefferson (6-3, 217, Fr.)
WLB Timothy Cole (6-1, 239, Jr.)
Edwin Freeman (6-1, 238, Fr.)
CB Bryson Echols (5-10, 181, Jr.)
Antwuan Davis (5-11, 193, So.)
CB Duke Thomas (5-11, 175, Sr.)
John Bonney (5-10, 184, Fr.)
FS Jason Hall (6-2, 205, So.)
Kevin Vaccaro (5-11, 183, Jr.)
SS Dylan Haines (6-1, 188, Jr.)
Adrian Colbert (6-1, 206, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Nick Rose (6-2, 188, Sr.)
P Mitchell Becker (6-2, 190, So.)

Sporting News All-American

KANSAS STATE
WILDCATS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **5**

Dante Barnett

A senior starting quarterback was a good omen for Kansas State heading into last season, and Jake Waters delivered an excellent year with league losses only at co-champions TCU and Baylor. The Wildcats were part of the league race through the finale.

K-State starts over at quarterback this season with three top candidates–Joe Hubener could be the front-runner based on experience. He was the primary backup for Waters last season but received only garbage-time snaps.

Hubener has never started a game behind center, in college or high school, where he was primarily a wide receiver and defensive back (although he did play some quarterback).

Also seeing some action under center for the Wildcats last season was Jesse Ertz, but a newcomer, freshman Alex Delton, is in the mix. Delton missed his spring semester at Hays (Kan.) High to practice with K-State.

"They're all a little bit different," Kansas State coach Bill Snyder says.

But whoever wins the job likely will do more with his legs this season. Waters was productive, with nine rushing touchdowns last season. But he also had the luxury of stellar wide receivers Tyler Lockett and Curry Sexton, who combined for 185 receptions and 16 touchdowns. Both are gone, so the Wildcats are looking at newcomers for the position.

Running back should be set with Charles Jones, who's coming off a 540-yard, 13-touchdown season, with some of that coming out of the Wildcat formation.

If there's a year where an experienced offensive line is needed, it's now, and K-State loses only center B.J. Finney. Tackle Cody Whitehair and guard Boston Stiverson are among the best at their positions in the Big 12.

The Wildcats lost productive defensive end Ryan Mueller and there are questions up front. But K-State's secondary, led by cornerback Morgan Burns and safety Dante Barnett, is talented and experienced.

Once again, special teams figure to be a strength. Kicker Matthew McCrane took over the job early in the second game and won all-league honors. Nick Walsh is back at punter after averaging 41.3 yards, and as good as Lockett was as a return man last season, Burns actually had a better kick-return average.

BOTTOM LINE

Kansas State is always undervalued in the preseason. Don't be surprised if the Wildcats finish higher than projected.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Dante Barnett, S

Barnett has been the "eye in the sky" for Kansas State the past two seasons. Last year he swooped down for 77 tackles and three interceptions, giving him 152 tackles and seven interceptions since 2013. It's nothing new. He finished his senior year of high school with 100 tackles and nine picks. The 6-1 senior's leadership and consistency will be vital for the Wildcats, who've lost a ton of talent on both sides of the ball.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	South Dakota	
S.12	@UTSA	
S.19	Louisiana Tech	
O.3	@OKLAHOMA STATE	48-14
O.10	TCU	20-41
O.17	Oklahoma	31-30
O.24	@TEXAS	23-0
N.5	Baylor	27-38
N.14	@TEXAS TECH	45-13
N.21	Iowa State	32-28
N.28	@KANSAS	51-13
D.5	West Virginia	26-20

Big XII

COACH

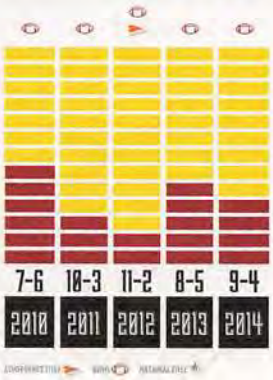
Bill Snyder
24th year (187-94-1)
Career record: 187-94-1

Offensive coordinators:
Dana Dimel (seventh year)
Del Miller (seventh year)
Defensive coordinator:
Tom Hayes (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 9-4
(Lost to UCLA in the Alamo Bowl, 40-35)
Stadium: Bill Snyder Family Stadium (50,000)
Tickets: 800-221-CATS
Site: Manhattan, Kan.
Website: kstatesports.com
Twitter: @kstatesports

5-YEAR RECORD 45-20



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Joe Hubener (6-4, 205, Jr.)
FB	Glenn Gronkowski (6-3, 234, Jr.)
RB	Charles Jones (5-10, 197, Jr.)
LT	Cody Whitehair (6-4, 309, Sr.)
LG	Boston Stiverson (6-4, 312, Sr.)
C	Reid Najvar (6-4, 290, So.)
RG	Luke Hayes (6-6, 295, Sr.)
RT	Matt Kleinsorge (6-5, 306, Sr.)
TE	Cody Small (6-4, 237, So.)
WR	Deante Burton (6-2, 205, Jr.)
WR	Kody Cook (6-1, 196, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jordan Willis (6-5, 250, Jr.)
DT	Will Geary (6-0, 290, So.)
DT	Travis Britz (6-4, 293, Sr.)
DE	Marquel Bryant (6-3, 241, Sr.)
LB	Elijah Lee (6-3, 214, So.)
LB	Will Davis (6-0, 223, Jr.)
LB	Charmeachealle Moore (6-0, 217, Jr.)
CB	Morgan Burns (5-11, 195, Sr.)
CB	Danzel McDaniel (6-1, 205, Sr.)
FS	Kaleb Prewett (6-1, 204, So.)
SS	Dante Barnett (6-1, 186, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Matthew McCrane (5-10, 165, So.)
P	Nick Walsh (5-10, 198, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

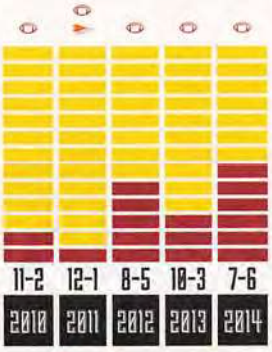
1. **Elijah Sullivan,** LB ★★★
2. **Duke Shelley,** CB ★★★
3. **Reggie Walker,** DE ★★★

The top two recruits in Kansas State's class came from Georgia, a testament to the Wildcats' willingness to go anywhere to find players. And while their class rank—54th nationally, eighth in the Big 12—is somewhat typical, their results weren't. Of the 22 signees, one came from a junior college. The Wildcats also dominated the state of Kansas with eight signees, including top linemen Scott Frantz and Evan Applegate.

BARNETT: ORLIN WAGNER / AP

OKLAHOMA STATE COWBOYS

5-YEAR RECORD 48-17



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Mason Rudolph (6-4, 220, So.)
RB Rennie Childs (5-10, 205, Jr.)
LT Victor Salako (6-6, 330, Jr.)
LG Michael Wilson (6-6, 305, Jr.)
C Brad Lundblade (6-3, 300, So.)
RG Jesse Robinson (6-6, 310, So.)
RT Zachary Crabtree (6-7, 305, So.)
TE Blake Jarwin (6-5, 242, Jr.)
WR Jhajuan Seales (6-2, 198, Jr.)
WR David Glidden (5-8, 185, Sr.)
WR James Washington (6-0, 200, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Emmanuel Ogbah (6-4, 275, Jr.)
DT Vincent Taylor (6-3, 300, So.)
DT Vili Leveni (6-3, 290, So.)
DE Jimmy Bean (6-5, 250, Sr.)
SLB Jordan Burton (6-3, 215, Jr.)
MLB Ryan Simmons (6-0, 240, Sr.)
WLB Seth Jacobs (6-2, 225, Jr.)
CB Kevin Peterson (5-11, 190, Sr.)
CB Ramon Richards (6-0, 180, So.)
FS Jordan Sterns (6-1, 205, Jr.)
SS Tre Flowers (6-3, 190, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K Ben Grogan (6-1, 186, Jr.)
P Zach Sinor (5-11, 195, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Darrion Daniels,** DT ★★★★
2. **John Kolar,** QB ★★★★
3. **Kevin Henry,** S ★★★★

The Cowboys return a bunch of players from 2014, so one of the goals was to add immediate-impact pieces, including multiple junior-college linemen, running back Chris Carson and athlete/quarterback Todd Mays. The No. 40 national class and No. 6 class in the Big 12 also included a number of key high school players, including a hotly pursued defensive tackle in Daniels and a quarterback of the future in Kolar.

Mason Rudolph

RUDOLPH: SUE OGROCKI / AP

Last season was spiraling for Oklahoma State. After starting 5-1, OSU dropped its next five, and some of the flow was predictable given the back-loaded schedule. Still, the losses were by large margins and coach Mike Gundy's future was questioned.

Then came an unexpected victory at Oklahoma, and for Cowboys' fans it doesn't get much better than that. Oklahoma State followed with a victory over Washington in the Cactus Bowl and calm was restored. The late-season rally coincided with the insertion of Mason Rudolph at quarterback. His redshirt was pulled off the week of the 11th game, and Rudolph's play against Baylor was encouraging. He excelled in the final two games and becomes the clear-cut favorite over former starter J.W. Walsh heading into the fall.

Several are in the mix to become the primary running back. Rennie Childs is the top returning candidate. He rushed for 294 yards and three touchdowns. Also battling is junior-college transfer Todd Mays, and another transfer, Chris Carson, will join the program in the summer and should compete for the job. There's competition because Tyreek Hill, the Big 12 Newcomer of the Year and second-team all-conference selection, is no longer with the program after allegations of domestic violence involving his pregnant girlfriend. Hill was a dynamic, all-purpose performer, a change-of-pace back and slot receiver who was always a scoring threat. He was the team's second-leading rusher at 534 yards.

On defense, the Cowboys have some vacancies to fill up front, but they return one of the Big 12's top linemen in end Emmanuel Ogbah, along with two-year starter Jimmy Bean on the other side.

Middle linebacker Ryan Simmons is the heart and soul of the defense, according to coordinator Glenn Spencer, and Seth Jacobs, the Defensive MVP of the Cactus Bowl, is back.

Oklahoma State is excited about safety Jordan Sterns, who led the team in tackles (103) and had 20 against West Virginia, the program's first 20-tackle game since 2001.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Mason Rudolph, QB

Last season, the Cowboys lost starting QB J.W. Walsh in Week One, and then his replacement, Daxx Garman, in Week 10. It fell to then-freshman Mason Rudolph to lead OSU to a strong finish. He succeeded, going 2-1 in three starts including consecutive wins over Oklahoma in Norman and Washington in the Cactus Bowl. The Cowboys had planned to redshirt the 6-4, 220-pound South Carolinian, but his 853 passing yards and six TDs proved he was ready.

BOTTOM LINE

For the first time since the Brandon Weeden era, the Cowboys know who their quarterback will be going into the season. And enough talent returns on defense for OSU to believe it can make a run in the conference race, especially with Baylor, TCU and Oklahoma visiting Stillwater.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **6**

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	@CENTRAL MICHIGAN	
S.12	Central Arkansas	
S.19	UTSA	43-13
S.26	@TEXAS	7-28
O.3	Kansas State	14-48
O.10	@WEST VIRGINIA	10-34
O.24	Kansas	27-20
O.31	@TEXAS TECH	45-35
N.7	TCU	9-42
N.14	@IOWA STATE	37-20
N.21	Baylor	28-49
N.28	Oklahoma	38-35

COACH

Mike Gundy
11th year (84-44)
Career record: 84-44

Offensive coordinator: Mike Yurcich (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Glenn Spencer (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat Washington in the Cactus Bowl, 30-22)
Stadium: Boone Pickens Stadium (60,218)
Tickets: 877-ALL-4-OSU
Site: Stillwater, Okla.
Website: okstate.com
Twitter: @CowboyFB

WEST VIRGINIA

MOUNTAINEERS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

7

KJ Dillon

Things got better last year for West Virginia after two disappointing seasons in the Big 12. A competitive loss to Alabama in the opener was a positive sign, and beating Baylor—essentially knocking the Bears from national championship contention—showed how good the Mountaineers could be.

Time for the next step and to start knocking on the door of becoming a championship contender.

"I like where we're at, I like this team," coach Dana Holgorsen says.

Nine starters return on defense under second-year coordinator Tony Gibson, and nose tackle Kyle Rose anchors the front. The strength of the defense is at linebacker, where Nick Kwiatkoski, who is moving from weakside to strongside, returns after leading West Virginia with 103 tackles and 11.5 for loss. An added bonus is getting back Jared Barber, who started seven games in 2013 before a knee injury forced him to miss the entire 2014 campaign.

Safety Karl Joseph is coming off an All-Big 12 season. He has started all 38 games in his career and always seems to be around the ball. A point of emphasis for the Mountaineers: turnovers. They finished last in the Big 12 and No. 120 nationally in turnover margin at minus-15.

The pitch-and-catch battery of Clint Trickett and Kevin White was tremendous and will be missed. White led the league with 109 total receptions. Trickett passed for 298.6 yards per game. Redshirt junior Skyler Howard is the front-runner to step in at quarterback. He has experience, finishing the season after Trickett was hurt late.

In addition to White, Mario Alford is gone, and competition at wide receiver is wide open. The top returning player there is Jordan Thompson, who had 49 receptions last year.

Running back is a bit more settled with last season's top two ground-gainers, Rushel Shell and Wendell Smallwood, back. They combined for 1,510 yards with nine touchdowns in 2014.

Kicker Josh Lambert, a Lou Groza Award finalist, ranks among the league's best, and Nick O'Toole will begin his third season as the punter. The Mountaineers are in good shape in the kicking game.

BOTTOM LINE

The Mountaineers should continue on a steady, if not upward, trend, but could be an experienced quarterback away from making a title run.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

KJ Dillon, SPUR

Dillon is the Mountaineers' SPUR—a hybrid nickel back/linebacker/pass rusher—and he gets the defense going as his title suggests. As part of each phase of the defense, Dillon has to decipher early on in the play what is needed. How successful was he last year? The 6-1 senior was fourth on the team in tackles with 62, he finished with 7.5 tackles for loss, and he was first in interceptions (3), pass breakups (7) and hurries (3).

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
9.5	Georgia Southern	
9.12	Liberty	
9.26	Maryland	40-37
10.3	@OKLAHOMA	33-45
10.10	Oklahoma State	34-10
10.17	@BAYLOR	41-27
10.29	@TCU	30-31
11.7	Texas Tech	37-34
11.14	Texas	16-33
11.21	@KANSAS	33-14
11.28	Iowa State	37-24
12.5	@KANSAS STATE	20-26

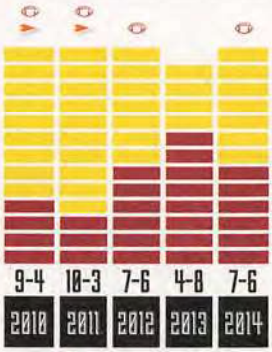
COACH

Dana Holgorsen
Fifth year (28-23)
Career record: 28-23
Offensive coordinator: Dana Holgorsen (fifth year)
Defensive coordinator: Tony Gibson (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Texas A&M in the Liberty Bowl, 45-37)
Stadium: Milan Puskar Stadium (60,000)
Tickets: 800-WVU-GAME
Site: Morgantown, W.Va.
Website: wvusports.com
Twitter: @WVUfootball

5-YEAR RECORD 37-27



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

- QB Skyler Howard (6-0, 202, Jr.)
- RB Rushel Shell (5-10, 221, Jr.)
- LT R. Haughton-James (6-5, 292, Sr.)
- LG Adam Pankey (6-5, 312, Jr.)
- C Tyler Orlosky (6-4, 297, Jr.)
- RG Tony Matteo (6-4, 296, Jr.)
- RT Marquis Lucas (6-4, 318, Sr.)
- IR Daikiel Shorts (6-1, 200, Jr.)
- IR Jordan Thompson (5-7, 176, Sr.)
- WR Vernon Davis Jr. (5-10, 175, Jr.)
- WR Shelton Gibson (5-11, 188, So.)

DEFENSE

- DE Christian Brown (6-2, 294, Jr.)
- NT Kyle Rose (6-4, 294, Sr.)
- DE Noble Nwachukwu (6-2, 271, Jr.)
- ROV KJ Dillon (6-1, 203, Sr.)
- LB Nick Kwiatkoski (6-2, 235, Sr.)
- LB Jared Barber (6-0, 232, Sr.)
- LB Shaq Petteway (6-0, 230, Sr.)
- CB Ricky Rumph (5-11, 188, Sr.)
- CB Terrell Chestnut (5-11, 188, Sr.)
- FS Dravon Henry (5-11, 198, So.)
- SS Karl Joseph (5-11, 197, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

- K Josh Lambert (5-11, 215, So.)
- P Nick O'Toole (6-3, 228, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT

TOP SIGNEES 247 Sports

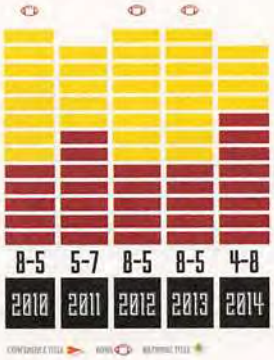
1. Jovon Durante, WR ★★★★
2. Tyrek Cole, CB ★★★★
3. Rasul Douglas, CB ★★★★

Landing Durante and Cole from Miramar (Fla.) High gave the class a great start, and the Mountaineers capitalized, building the Big 12's fourth-best class and the No. 36 class in the country. Douglas was one of the best junior-college cornerbacks and fills an immediate need. West Virginia also needed to restock the quarterback pool and landed a pair of early enrollees in David Sills and Chris Chugunov.

DILLON: MARK HUMPHREY / AP

TEXAS TECH
RED RAIDERS

5-YEAR RECORD 33-30



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Davis Webb (6-5, 227, Jr.)
RB DeAndre Washington (5-8, 198, Sr.)
LT Le'Raven Clark (6-6, 316, Sr.)
LG Alfredo Morales (6-4, 310, Sr.)
C Jared Kaster (6-3, 293, Sr.)
RG Baylen Brown (6-4, 310, Jr.)
RT Justin Murphy (6-7, 296, Fr.)
WR Devin Lauderdale (6-0, 181, Jr.)
WR Jakeem Grant (5-6, 169, Sr.)
WR Ian Sadler (5-10, 198, So.)
WR Reginald Davis (6-0, 185, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Branden Jackson (6-4, 268, Sr.)
NT Rika Levi (6-2, 339, Sr.)
DT Keland McElrath (6-4, 307, Sr.)
DE Pete Robertson (6-3, 238, Sr.)
OLB Kris Williams (6-1, 228, Jr.)
MLB Micah Awe (6-0, 223, Sr.)
OLB Malik Jenkins (6-1, 222, Jr.)
CB Justis Nelson (6-2, 179, Jr.)
CB Nigel Bethel II (5-9, 184, So.)
FS Jah'Shawn Johnson (5-10, 174, Fr.)
SS Keenon Ward (5-9, 204, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Taylor Symmank (6-2, 192, Sr.)
P Taylor Symmank (6-2, 192, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1 ▸ **Breiden Fehoko,** DT ★★★★
2 ▸ **JF Thomas,** WR ★★★★
3 ▸ **Corey Dauphine,** RB ★★★★

Losing top quarterback Jarrett Stidham to Big 12 rival Baylor hurts, but Fehoko, Thomas and Dauphine were all highly recruited. Fehoko was one of the strongest players in the 2015 class and fills a major need. The Red Raiders built the Big 12's third-best recruiting class and the nation's 33rd-best class through outstanding evaluations like offensive linemen Conner Dyer and Madison Akamnonu and talented safety Jamile Johnson.

WASHINGTON: TIM SHARP / AP

DeAndre Washington

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

8

Texas Tech played its heart out in the 2014 finale, and that's a credit to coach Kliff Kingsbury and his staff because the Red Raiders were going nowhere. Baylor kept alive its Big 12 title hopes by holding off Tech 48-46 in Arlington, and Tech went home with a 4-8 record.

In that game, Patrick Mahomes set a Big 12 freshman passing record with 598 yards, and he's locked in a battle with Davis Webb for the starting role.

Webb was last year's starter, coming off a bowl-game MVP performance, but he threw 13 interceptions in eight games and was injured late. Over the final three weeks, Mahomes threw for 14 touchdowns with only two picks.

Webb is a pocket passer while Mahomes is more a dual-threat type, and both were limited in the spring. Webb was held out of some drills while rehabbing from offseason shoulder surgery and Mahomes was splitting time with the baseball team.

With Kingsbury calling plays, the offense should hum again. It wasn't a vintage year for the Red Raiders, but they ranked among the league leaders in yards per play (6.62) and third-down conversions (43.7 percent). The top player on that side of the ball is tackle Le'Raven Clark.

The program made a splash by hiring David Gibbs as defensive coordinator. Gibbs has spent most of his career as an NFL assistant before returning to the college ranks at Houston in 2013. Tech will move to a 4-3 and look to some newcomers for immediate help.

One is linebacker Mike Mitchell, a former five-star recruit who attended Ohio State. He sat out as redshirt and didn't play in his second season. Another impact newcomer could be freshman lineman Breiden Fehoko, who enrolled in the spring.

Gibbs' defense at Houston last season forced 30 turnovers, ranking fifth nationally. That becomes an emphasis for a Red Raiders team that finished ninth in the Big 12 at minus-13 on the season.

Also, Tech needs to clean up the flags. The Red Raiders ranked next to last in Division 1 with 9.3 penalties per game.

BOTTOM LINE

The Red Raiders will be productive again, but remaining disciplined will be critical if they want to reverse fortunes.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

DeAndre Washington, RB

Washington was one of just three Big 12 backs to eclipse 1,000 rushing yards last year. His 1,103 yards on 188 carries gave him a 5.9 average for 91.9 yards per game. More than that, though, his totals were evidence that he is all the way back from an ACL injury suffered in his freshman season and that he is indeed the feature back that the Red Raiders tabbed him as way back in 2011, when he was a highly touted in-state recruit out of Missouri City.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Sam Houston State	
S.12	UTEP	30-26
S.19	@ARKANSAS	28-49
S.26	TCU	27-82
O.3	Baylor (at Arlington, TX)	46-48
O.10	Iowa State	34-31
O.17	@KANSAS	34-21
O.24	@OKLAHOMA	30-42
O.31	Oklahoma State	35-45
N.7	@WEST VIRGINIA	34-37
N.14	Kansas State	13-45
N.26	@TEXAS	13-34

COACH

Kliff Kingsbury
Third year (12-13)
Career record: 12-13

Offensive coordinator: Eric Morris (third year)
Defensive coordinators: David Gibbs (first year)
Mike Smith (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 4-8
Stadium: Jones AT&T Stadium (60,454)
Tickets: 806-742-8324
Site: Lubbock, Texas
Website: texastech.com
Twitter: @TechAthletics

IOWA STATE
CYCLONES

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **9**

Sam B. Richardson

Iowa State hit the bottom last season, or at least coach Paul Rhoads hopes so. A winless Big 12 season was capped by a 52-point loss at TCU–it doesn't get much worse. The Cyclones were ravaged by injuries. Only four players started every game for ISU, which didn't have enough depth to stay afloat. "I'd like to have a Senior Day where we are all padded up instead of in our street clothes," Rhoads says.

But ...

"We are a lot closer than we are further away," Rhoads says.

Perhaps. One luxury for Iowa State this season is a senior quarterback. Sam B. Richardson has been battling for the job for most of his career, but he's the guy for 2015 and the Cyclones need performances from him like they got last year against Texas, when he threw for 345 yards and accounted for four touchdowns. Grant Rohach, who has starting experience, also returns.

Richardson will have plenty of targets at wide receiver. Quenton Bundrage is back after missing last year with a torn ACL. He had 48 receptions in 2013 and joins former South Florida player D'Vario Montgomery (44 catches, 605 yards) and Allen Lazard (45, 593).

When Rhoads talks about injuries, he thinks first of the offensive line. Iowa State will lean on tackles Brock Dagel (15 career starts) and Jake Campos (11) and guards Jamison Lalk (19) and Daniel Burton (20).

The top defender is safety Kamari Cotton-Moya, a Freshman All-American last season who happily returned to the spring practice field after suffering a frightening injury that resulted in a concussion and three days in the hospital.

The Cyclones believe they have a good one in linebacker Jordan Harris. He's a junior-college transfer who sat out last season.

The secondary looms as the strength on defense, with Cotton-Moya, second-team all-league cornerback Nigel Tribune and corner Sam E. Richardson, also a returning starter.

The schedule should provide Iowa State with an opportunity for a positive start with three of the first four at home before the teeth of the schedule arrives in mid-October.

BOTTOM LINE

This could be a make-or-break season for Rhoads, who has missed out on postseason play two straight years and is 2-16 in league games during that span.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Sam B. Richardson, QB

The Cyclones have two Sam Richardsons. There's Sam E., who led the Cyclones with four interceptions, and Sam B., the senior quarterback who finished last year with a school-record 254 completions and was just the third Cyclones signal-caller in history to exceed 3,000 yards of total offense. Richardson was two TD passes short of the school record (18), but he'll challenge it again this year with his top two receivers returning.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Northern Iowa	
S.12	Iowa	20-17
S.19	@TOLEDO	37-30
O.3	Kansas	14-34
O.10	@TEXAS TECH	31-34
O.17	TCU	3-55
O.24	@BAYLOR	28-49
O.31	Texas	45-48
N.7	@OKLAHOMA	14-59
N.14	Oklahoma State	20-37
N.21	@KANSAS STATE	28-32
N.28	@WEST VIRGINIA	24-37

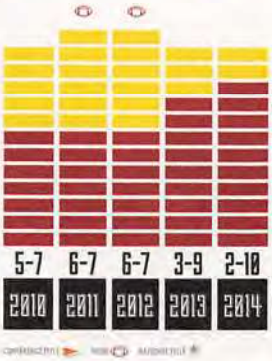
COACH

Paul Rhoads
Seventh year (29-46)
Career record: 29-46
Offensive coordinator: Mark Mangino (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Wally Burnham (seventh year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 2-10
Stadium: Jack Trice Stadium (54,800)
Tickets: 888-478-2925
Site: Ames, Iowa
Website: cyclones.com
Twitter: @CycloneFB

5-YEAR RECORD 22-48



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Sam B. Richardson (6-2, 214, Sr.)
TB	Tyler Brown (5-11, 186, So.)
LT	Jake Campos (6-8, 295, So.)
LG	Jamison Lalk (6-6, 311, Sr.)
C	Patrick Scoggins (6-1, 290, Jr.)
RG	Daniel Burton (6-6, 330, Jr.)
RT	Brock Dagel (6-8, 306, Sr.)
TE	Ben Boesen (6-5, 241, Sr.)
WR	D'Vario Montgomery (6-6, 236, Jr.)
WR	Quenton Bundrage (6-2, 192, Sr.)
WR	Allen Lazard (6-5, 218, So.)

DEFENSE

LE	Dale Pierson (6-2, 246, Sr.)
DT	Devlyn Cousin (6-4, 302, Jr.)
NG	Vernell Trent (6-3, 289, So.)
RE	Darius White (6-1, 251, Jr.)
LB	Reggan Northrup (6-1, 191, Fr.)
LB	Kane Seeley (6-2, 241, Jr.)
LB	Luke Knott (6-1, 221, Jr.)
CB	Nigel Tribune (5-11, 188, Jr.)
CB	Sam E. Richardson (5-8, 189, Sr.)
FS	Kamari Cotton-Moya (6-1, 194, So.)
SS	Qujuan Floyd (6-0, 202, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Cole Netten (6-1, 219, Jr.)
P	Colin Downing (5-11, 190, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1. Demond Tucker, DT ★★★
2. De'Amontae Jackson, DT ★★★
3. Joshua Thomas, LB ★★★

Iowa State had the nation's No. 71 class, which ranked ninth in the Big 12, but the Cyclones did fill needs. The two biggest program needs were at defensive tackle–where Iowa State inked four players, including two juco players–and at quarterback. The Cyclones found their future quarterback in Dominic DeLira from Texas. In-state offensive linemen such as Julian Good-Jones and Bryce Meeker were also key signees.

RICHARDSON: CHARLIE NEIBERGALL / AP

KANSAS JAYHAWKS

5-YEAR RECORD 12-48

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Michael Cummings (5-10, 212, Sr.)
RB Ke'aun Kinner (5-9, 180, Jr.)
LT Jordan Shelley-Smith (6-5, 296, Jr.)
LG Bryan Peters (6-3, 298, Sr.)
C Keyon Haughton (6-2, 290, Sr.)
RG Junior Visinia (6-4, 375, So.)
RT Larry Mazyck (6-8, 343, Sr.)
TE Ben Johnson (6-5, 234, So.)
WR Tre' Parmalee (5-10, 171, Sr.)
WR Rodriguez Coleman (6-3, 185, Sr.)
WR Derrick Neal (5-10, 170, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Ben Goodman (6-3, 253, Sr.)
DT Kapil Fletcher (6-3, 271, Sr.)
DT Andrew Bolton (6-3, 293, Sr.)
DE Damani Mosby (6-3, 239. Jr.)
LB Schyler Miles (6-2, 221, Jr.)
LB Courtney Arnick (6-2, 207, Jr.)
NB Tevin Shaw (5-11, 194, Jr.)
CB Brandon Stewart (6-0, 171, Jr.)
CB Ronnie Davis (6-0, 192, Sr.)
FS Fish Smithson (5-11, 193, Jr.)
SS Greg Allen (5-11, 212, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Matthew Wyman (6-1, 218, Jr.)
P Eric Kahn (6-5, 204, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1 • **Ke'aun Kinner,** RB ★★★
2 • **Ryan Willis,** QB ★★★
3 • **Aaron Garza,** OG ★★★

New Kansas coach David Beaty comes in with a reputation as one of the nation's best recruiters, but he didn't have much time to influence the Jayhawks' 2015 class, ranked 72nd nationally and last in the Big 12. Tailback Ke'aun Kinner was the highest-rated recruit Beaty landed, though pass rusher Dorance Armstrong might have been the best. Keep an eye on juco corner Brandon Stewart, who could start immediately, and tight end Jace Sternberger.

Jake Love

LOVE: CHARLIE RIEDEL / AP

A new era begins, and Kansas hopes it brings a change in fortune. The Jayhawks were going nowhere under Charlie Weis, and after four games, athletic director Sheahon Zenger pulled the plug. Weis was gone less than two and a half years into his regime, and Clint Bowen took over in the interim.

The program's spirit improved under Bowen and the Jayhawks were competitive against Oklahoma State and TCU. He was a candidate for the job on a permanent basis and he remained on the staff when the job went elsewhere.

David Beaty arrives from Texas A&M, where he had served as recruiting coordinator and wide receivers coach. The recruiting-coordinator part of that is critical. Kansas needs players, and Beaty has the reputation of being one of the best recruiters in Texas.

He also served two stints at Kansas, including the most recent bowl season of 2008. So he has seen winning football in Lawrence.

But this is truly a building process. Weis went heavy on junior-college transfers in his second recruiting class, which impacted the Jayhawks' numbers. Kansas started the spring with 93 players on the roster, and about 20 percent of them were walk-ons.

Kansas returns just seven starters. There was talent in the program last season, including three first-team all-conference players. Nearly every proven playmaker is gone.

But the quarterback returns. Michael Cummings replaced Montell Cozart at midseason and threw for nine touchdowns and six interceptions. The Jayhawks are installing an uptempo spread attack this season. Offensive coordinator Rob Likens helped guide a similar attack at Cal.

There aren't many position units with depth, but running back is one. Corey Avery, De'Andre Mann and Taylor Cox return, but look for talented juco import Ke'aun Kinner to make a big impact.

The defense loses a terrific linebacker in Ben Heeney and all of its top players from what was a solid secondary.

But returning is Bowen, the most loyal soldier in college football. Nobody is more invested in Kansas football than Bowen, who grew up in Lawrence, played for the Jayhawks and has served 17 seasons of his 20-year coaching career with the program.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Jake Love, LB

The 6-0, 220-pound senior is lauded for his instincts and knack for big plays. One such play came in a September win against Central Michigan when Love was supposed to blitz on a third-and-12 pass attempt but sensed something was amiss after the snap and backed off. His instincts allowed him to shut down a screen pass that could have gone for a first down had he blitzed. It also preserved 17-10 lead that ended up a 24-10 Jaywaks win.

BOTTOM LINE

Finding victories will be difficult for a Kansas team that will rely on a new offense and many new faces on the defensive side.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **10**

Big XII

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	South Dakota State	
S.12	Memphis	
S.26	@RUTGERS	
O.3	@IOWA STATE	34-14
O.10	Baylor	14-60
O.17	Texas Tech	21-34
O.24	@OKLAHOMA STATE	20-27
O.31	Oklahoma	7-44
N.7	@TEXAS	0-23
N.14	@TCU	30-34
N.21	West Virginia	14-33
N.28	Kansas State	13-51

COACH

David Beaty
First year

Offensive coordinator: Rob Likens (first year)
Defensive coordinators: Clint Bowen (second year) Kenny Perry (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: Memorial Stadium (50,071)
Tickets: 800-34-HAWKS
Site: Lawrence, Kan.
Website: kuathletics.com
Twitter: @KU_Football

PROJECTED FINISH

East Division

1. **Western Kentucky**
   Bowl Projection: Bahamas Bowl
2. **Marshall**
   Bowl Projection: Heart of Dallas Bowl
3. **Middle Tennessee**
   Bowl Projection: New Mexico Bowl
4. **Old Dominion**
5. **Florida International**
6. **Florida Atlantic**
7. **Charlotte**

West Division

1. **Louisiana Tech**
   Bowl Projection: Hawaii Bowl
2. **Rice**
   Bowl Projection: Boca Raton Bowl
3. **UTEP**
   Bowl Projection: Miami Beach Bowl
4. **Southern Miss**
5. **North Texas**
6. **UTSA**

Devon Johnson, RB, Marshall

Expect another season of shootouts in high-scoring CUSA

BY MICHAEL GRANT | *Louisville Courier-Journal*

Conference USA lived up to its high-scoring reputation and produced some exciting games down the stretch. Marshall (45.6 points per game, third in the nation), Western Kentucky (44.4, sixth), and Louisiana Tech (37.4, 13th) were at times overwhelming on offense. The Hilltoppers' 67-66 overtime upset at Marshall was the C-USA game of the year and one of the best college football games of the season.

There could be more high-scoring action this season for a league that went 4-1 in bowl games. Western Kentucky quarterback Brandon Doughty will be back after being granted a sixth year of eligibility. He led the nation in passing yards (4,830) and TDs (49). Louisiana Tech will add Florida transfer quarterback Jeff Driskel. And Rice's Driphus Jackson, the league's third-most efficient passer last year, also returns.

On paper, Western Kentucky and Louisiana Tech appear to be the class of the East and West divisions, respectively. The Hilltoppers have virtually their entire team back from a squad that went 8-5 in its inaugural season in the league.

You can't count out defending champion Marshall, which went 13-1 to tie the C-USA record for wins in a season. The Herd finished the season ranked No. 23 in the Associated Press poll. Marshall has to replace quarterback Rakeem Cato but has two of the league's premiere running backs: Devon Johnson and Steward Butler.

The biggest change for the 13-team league will be the departure of UAB and the addition of Charlotte. UAB shut down its football program much to the anger of many fans and it has made school president Ray Watts—as described by the *New York Times*—the "most unpopular man in Birmingham."

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Charlotte, a start-up FBS program. The 49ers averaged 38.8 points per game last year so they should fit right into the league. However, their defense figures to have a tough time adjusting. Charlotte will take UAB's vacant spot and compete in the seven-team East Division.

Kenneth Dixon, RB, Louisiana Tech

JOHNSON: ALAN DIAZ / AP; DOUGHTY: PATRICK SEMANSKY / AP; DIXON: LM OTERO / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 How good will WKU be? They have the league's best quarterback, a premiere tailback and most of their top wide receivers back. If the WKU defense is merely average, this could be their best season since 2009.

2015 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Chad Carson, 247Sports

247 SPORTS COMPOSITE

RANK	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	POINTS
1	Marshall	25	0	0	14	150.07
2	Florida Atlantic	26	0	0	14	145.75
3	Louisiana Tech	22	0	0	14	143.37
4	Southern Miss	25	0	0	10	129.24
5	Florida International	23	0	0	9	124.73
6	Old Dominion	24	0	0	7	123.18
7	North Texas	24	0	0	9	121.97
8	UTSA	31	0	0	11	120.58
9	Middle Tennessee	23	0	0	8	119.55
10	Rice	19	0	0	7	118.29
11	Western Kentucky	21	0	0	5	114.09
12	Charlotte	16	0	0	2	87.53
13	UTEP	22	0	0	1	69.32

ALL-CONFERENCE USA

OFFENSE

- QB **Brandon Doughty,** Sr., Western Kentucky
- RB **Devon Johnson,** Sr., Marshall
- RB **Kenneth Dixon,** Sr., Louisiana Tech
- OL **Forrest Lamp,** Jr., Western Kentucky
- OL **Andrew Reue,** Sr., Rice
- OL **Darius Johnson,** Sr., Middle Tennessee
- OL **Clint Van Horn,** Sr., Marshall
- OL **Kirby Wixson,** Sr., Louisiana Tech
- TE **Jonnu Smith,** Jr., Florida International
- WR **Jared Dangerfield,** Sr., Western Kentucky
- WR **Carlos Harris,** Sr., North Texas

DEFENSE

- DL **Vernon Butler,** Sr., Louisiana Tech
- DL **Chad Polk,** Sr., North Texas
- DL **Roy Robertson-Harris,** Sr., UTEP
- DL **Mike Wakefield,** Sr., Florida International
- LB **Drew Douglas,** Sr., UTSA
- LB **T.T. Barber,** Sr., Middle Tennessee
- LB **Alvin Jones,** So., UTEP
- DB **Richard Leonard,** Sr., Florida International
- DB **Wonderful Terry,** Sr., Western Kentucky
- DB **Kevin Byard,** Sr., Middle Tennessee
- DB **Xavier Woods,** Jr., Louisiana Tech

SPECIALISTS

- K **Trevor Moore,** So., North Texas
- P **Tyler Williams,** Sr., Marshall

PRESEASON MVP

Doughty's evolution from backup to the nation's most prolific passer has been extraordinary. The sixth-year senior has improved every season and has become a legitimate NFL prospect. Most of his supporting cast is back and the defense should be better. He could lead the Hilltoppers to a 10-win season.

Brandon Doughty

OVERRATED

LOUISIANA TECH

Florida transfer Jeff Driskel (23 touchdowns and 20 interceptions) wasn't very good with the Gators. No guarantee he will be improved with the Bulldogs.

UNDERRATED

SOUTHERN MISS

With 10 returning starters on offense, the Golden Eagles should be better. Quarterback Nick Mullens is now a junior and his receivers are experienced.

2 Fresh meat (again): Last season, CUSA added WKU and Old Dominion. Both fared well. This year, Charlotte joins. It's hard to imagine that the 49ers will be as successful in their inaugural season.

3 How far will Marshall slip? Marshall came close to perfection. This season, the Herd has a tougher schedule and will be without departed QB Rakeem Cato and WR Tommy Shuler.

RATING CONFERENCE USA

FASTEST RECEIVER
Davonte Allen, Marshall
He averaged 24.7 yards per catch. Could be ready for a breakout season.

BEST HANDS
Carlos Harris, WR, North Texas
Was third in Conference USA in receptions per game (5.8).

BEST PASSING QB
Brandon Doughty, Western Kentucky
The sixth-year senior led the nation in passing yards (4,830) and TD passes (49).

BEST RUNNING QB
Jaquez Johnson, Florida Atlantic
Rushed for 513 yards and seven scores.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Kenneth Dixon, Louisiana Tech
Had a 99-yard TD run plus TD catches of 80 and 84 yards.

BEST INSTINCTS
Devon Johnson, RB, Marshall
The converted tight end led the league in rushing (1,767 yards) and yards per carry (8.6).

BEST ATHLETE
Kenneth Dixon, RB, Louisiana Tech
Was third in the nation in touchdowns with 28.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED (OFF THE FIELD)
Cameron Tom, OL, Southern Miss
Has a 3.8 GPA as a business major.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Brandon Doughty, QB, Western Kentucky
Has overcome numerous setbacks to lead WKU to its two best seasons in the FBS.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Kevin Byard, SS, Middle Tennessee
Senior strong safety has 15 career interceptions and has returned four for TDs.

TOP IMPACT FROSH
Raylen Elzy, WR, Marshall
The 6-4, 200-pounder was a three-star recruit. Expected to contribute early.

HARDEST HITTER
T.T. Barber, LB, Middle Tennessee
Has been a consistent tackling machine for the Blue Raiders.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Erick Evans, RB, North Texas
Former walk-on rushed for three TDs in six games last year.

BEST INTERVIEW
Larry Coker, UTSA
He always seems to keep a good sense of humor.

BEST COACH AS STRATEGIST
Jeff Brohm, Western Kentucky
In his first year as a college head coach, he assembled the greatest offense in the history of the school and one of the best in C-USA history.

BEST COACH AS RECRUITER
Doc Holliday, Marshall
The Herd consistently gets talent and key players from Florida.

HOTTEST SEAT
Rob Turner, Florida International
The Panthers showed improvement in 2014 but will have do even more this season for Turner's seat to begin cooling.

BEST VENUE
Joan C. Edwards Stadium, Marshall
The stadium has a lot of tradition and has been the site of some great games.

WESTERN KENTUCKY

HILLTOPPERS

Conference USA - East

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1

Jared Dangerfield

With a virtually unstoppable offense and an overmatched defense, the Hilltoppers were anything but dull last season. Five games were decided by a touchdown or less.

They blew double-digit leads in all but one loss. Their final two games were decided on two-point-conversion tries. The Hilltoppers converted one to topple previously unbeaten Marshall 67-66 in overtime. In the Bahamas Bowl, after Central Michigan scored an improbable TD, it failed on the two-point conversion try and WKU won 49-48.

The best news for WKU is that record-setting quarterback Brandon Doughty was granted a sixth year of eligibility. That means the Hilltoppers will have their top passer, rusher and four of their five top receivers back for an offense that broke 50 school and conference records in coach Jeff Brohm's first season.

Doughty was the triggerman behind the nation's sixth-highest-scoring (44.4 ppg) offense. He led the nation in passing yards (4,830), TD passes (49) and was sixth in completion percentage (67.9). The least surprising player for WKU was tailback Leon Allen. As a junior, he exploded for 1,542 rushing yards–18th best in the country.

Jared Dangerfield (69 catches for 825 yards, 11 TDs) and Taywan Taylor (45, 767, 7) are the top wideouts. Tyler Higbee (15, 230, 4) will take over as the No. 1 tight end with Mitchell Henry gone.

Western Kentucky's defense was fifth worst in the nation in points allowed (39.9 per game) and sixth worst in yards allowed (509.9). The Hilltoppers were not big enough on the defensive line and were hurt by a lack of experience. They have nine returning starters and will add some bulk thanks to a few transfers.

Junior-college defensive linemen Sidney Hammond and Omarius Bryant and former UAB defensive tackle Jontavious Morris should help. Two bright spots in the secondary were Wonderful Terry and Branden Leston. Terry scored three TDs–two interceptions and one on a fumble return. Leston had three interceptions in the Marshall game.

BOTTOM LINE

If WKU's defense is merely average and the offense is status quo, the Hilltoppers will have a chance to win 10 games.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Jared Dangerfield, WR

Dangerfield earned plenty of respect during his first year with the Hilltoppers, leading the team with 69 receptions, 825 yards and 11 touchdowns as a junior. The 6-3, 200-pound juco transfer from West Palm Beach, Fla., quickly became the favorite target of WKU quarterback Brandon Doughty with 10 receptions in the season opener, a 59-31 win over Bowling Green. Dangerfield also helped Western end Marshall's undefeated season, and undoubtedly impressed NFL scouts when he stretched out for an overtime touchdown grab while keeping both feet inbounds in a 67-66 win.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@VANDERBILT	
S.10	Louisiana Tech	10-59
S.19	@INDIANA	
S.26	Miami (Ohio)	
O.3	@RICE	
O.10	Middle Tennessee	47-50
O.15	@NORTH TEXAS	
O.24	@LSU	
O.31	@OLD DOMINION	66-51
N.7	Florida Atlantic	38-45
N.21	@FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL	
N.27	Marshall	67-66

COACH

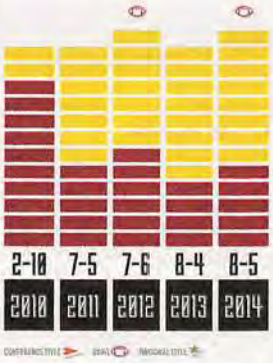
Jeff Brohm
Second year (8-5)
Career record: 8-5

Offensive coordinator: Tyson Helton (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Nick Holt (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Central Michigan in the Bahamas Bowl, 49-48)
Stadium: Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium (22,113)
Tickets: 1-800-5-BIG-RED
Site: Bowling Green, Ky.
Website: wkusports.com
Twitter: @WKUFootball

5-YEAR RECORD 32-30



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Brandon Doughty (6-3, 216, Sr.)
RB	Leon Allen (6-0, 235, Sr.)
LT	Forrest Lamp (6-4, 296, Jr.)
LG	Brandon Ray (6-3, 285, So.)
C	Max Halpin (6-3, 295, Jr.)
RG	Darrell Williams (6-6, 310, Jr.)
RT	Matt Nord (6-6, 309, Jr.)
TE	Tyler Higbee (6-5, 233, Sr.)
WR	Nicholas Norris (5-10, 175, Jr.)
WR	Taywan Taylor (6-1, 190, Jr.)
WR	Jared Dangerfield (6-3, 200, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Derik Overstreet (6-2, 250, So.)
DT	Devante Terrell (6-0, 295, Jr.)
DT	Bryan Shorter (6-2, 285, Sr.)
DE	Gavin Rocker (6-2, 245, Sr.)
LB	Drew Davis (6-1, 215, Jr.)
LB	Nick Holt (6-1, 230, Sr.)
LB	Dejon Brown (6-3, 225, Sr.)
CB	Wonderful Terry (5-10, 180, Sr.)
CB	Prince Charles Iwcrah (5-11, 193, Sr.)
FS	Branden Leston (6-3, 215, Jr.)
SS	Marcus Ward (6-3, 204, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Garrett Schwettman (5-11, 160, Sr.)
P	Joseph Occhipinti (6-3, 190, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT

247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Quin Jernighan,** WR ★★★
2. **Devon Quincy,** LB ★★★
3. **Aldwin Jackson,** CB ★★★

Help is on the way for a Western Kentucky defense that ranked near the bottom nationally in rushing defense as second-year coach Jeff Brohm signed a class heavy on front-seven bodies, including highly regarded in-state linebacker Devon Quincy (Lexington, Ky./Lafayette). The Hilltoppers' high-powered passing attack will be reinforced by a group of big, physical pass catchers led by Quin Jernighan (6-3, 200 pounds) of LaVergne, Tenn., and Andre Thomas-Cobb (6-3, 200) of Lehigh (Fla.) Acres.

DANGERFIELD: BRADLEY LEEB/AP

MARSHALL
THUNDERING HERD

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **2**

Devon Johnson

5-YEAR RECORD 48-25

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

- **QB** Gunnar Holcombe (6-3, 208, Jr.)
- **RB** Devon Johnson (6-1, 246, Sr.)
- **LT** Sandley Jean-Felix (6-5, 309, So.)
- **LG** Sebastian Johansson (6-5, 292, Sr.)
- **C** Michael Selby (6-2, 276, Jr.)
- **RG** Cody Collins (6-1, 283, So.)
- **RT** Clint Van Horn (6-5, 295, Sr.)
- **TE** Ryan Yurachek (6-3, 231, So.)
- **WR** Davonte Allen (6-2, 201, Sr.)
- **WR** Deon-Tay McManus (6-2, 228, So.)
- **WR** Hyleck Foster (5-10, 191, So.)

DEFENSE

- **DE** Joe Massaquoi (6-5, 254, Jr.)
- **DT** Jarquez Samuel (6-4, 290, Sr.)
- **DT** Steve Dillon (6-4, 278, Sr.)
- **DE** Gary Thompson (6-1, 258, Jr.)
- **LB** D.J. Hunter (6-0, 209, Sr.)
- **LB** Raheim Huskey (6-2, 218, So.)
- **LB** Stefan Houston (6-3, 215, Jr.)
- **CB** Keith Baxter (6-0, 195, Sr.)
- **CB** Corey Tindal (5-9, 183, Jr.)
- **FS** A.J. Leggett (6-0, 198, Jr.)
- **SS** Taj Letman (6-2, 189, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

- **K** Nick Smith (5-10, 168, So.)
- **P** Tyler Williams (6-0, 200, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

1. **Von Davis,** CB ★★★
2. **Delvin Weems,** RB ★★★
3. **Channing Hames,** DE ★★★

The Conference USA champs reeled in their third consecutive top-ranked class in the conference. The Herd had success this cycle in Florida, where they plucked cornerback Von Davis (Mount Dora, Fla./High), who held offers from schools in the SEC, ACC, Big Ten and Pac-12. Marshall is set to lose a ton of production at running back after the 2015 season, so Tyrone (Ga.) Tucker High standout Delvin Weems (1,300 yards and 21 TDs in 2014) was an important get at the position.

Conference USA champion Marshall came close to perfection. Marshall tied the league record for victories with 13 and finished No. 23 in the final Associated Press poll and No. 22 in the final Coaches Poll.

Coach Doc Holliday, the league's Coach of the Year, will return after he had been rumored for the Florida and Pittsburgh jobs. He received a six-year contract extension.

The biggest void in the league will be replacing quarterback Rakeem Cato. He threw a TD pass in an NCAA-record 46 consecutive games. Cato threw 40 TD passes to 13 interceptions and ended his career as the school's all-time leader in completions and TD passes. He led an offense that was third in the FBS in scoring (45.6 ppg).

Junior Gunnar Holcombe and Michael Birdsong (a James Madison transfer) are the early favorites to replace Cato. Holcombe saw limited action in nine games. At 6-3, he's taller than Cato and he had a 41-yard run as a redshirt sophomore last year. Birdsong is 6-5 and played in eight games as a true freshman at James Madison.

The star of the Marshall offense will be tailback Devon Johnson. He led the nation in yards per carry (8.6). He rushed for 1,767 yards, which was sixth nationally and the second most in school history.

Deon-Tay McManus is the top returning wide receiver. As a redshirt freshman, he caught 26 passes for 422 yards and six TDs. Davonte Allen (22 catches for 544 yards, 4 TDs) is also back. Incoming freshman Raylen Elzy is a player to watch.

With the exception of the WKU game, Marshall's defense was stout all season. It ranked 18th in the nation in scoring (21 ppg). It will need to replace five all-conference players.

Linebacker D.J. Hunter and defensive back Corey Tindal return. Hunter was fourth on the team in tackles (80), had 10 tackles for a loss and 5.5 sacks. Tindal was sixth in tackles with 73 and broke up 12 passes.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Devon Johnson, RB

If Johnson, at 6-1 and 246 pounds, seems big for a running back, it's because he was a tight end up until last year as a junior. He adjusted well: 1,767 rushing yards, 8.6 yards per carry and 17 touchdowns. The Herd didn't use his receiving skills much (6 catches, 2 TDs) despite averaging 18.2 yards per catch on 12 receptions in 2013. But with the prolific combo of receiver Tommy Shuler (92 receptions) and quarterback Rakeem Cato (40 passing TDs) gone, Johnson will likely get more use in the passing game.

BOTTOM LINE

The quarterback position needs to be settled. But helped by the top incoming recruiting class in the conference, the Herd should be formidable by the end of the season.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.6	Purdue	
S.12	@OHIO	44-14
S.19	Norfolk State	
S.26	@KENT STATE	
O.3	Old Dominion	56-14
O.9	Southern Miss	63-17
O.17	@FLORIDA ATLANTIC	35-16
O.24	North Texas	
O.31	@CHARLOTTE	
N.7	@MIDDLE TENNESSEE	49-24
N.14	Florida International	45-13
N.27	@WESTERN KENTUCKY	66-67

COACH

John "Doc" Holliday
Sixth year (40-25)
Career record: 40-25

Offensive coordinator: Bill Legg (sixth year)
Defensive coordinator: Chuck Heater (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 13-1
(Beat Northern Illinois in the Boca Raton Bowl, 52-23)
Stadium: Joan C. Edwards Stadium (38,227)
Tickets: 800-THE-HERD
Site: Huntington, W.Va.
Website: herdzone.com
Twitter: @HerdFB

JOHNSON: ALAN MAIN/AP

3 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
BLUE RAIDERS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Jackson State	
S.12	@ALABAMA	
S.19	Charlotte	
S.26	@ILLINOIS	
O.3	Vanderbilt	
O.10	@WESTERN KENTUCKY	50-47
O.17	Florida International	28-38
O.24	@LOUISIANA TECH	
N.7	Marshall	24-49
N.14	@FLORIDA ATLANTIC	35-34
N.21	North Texas	
N.28	@UTSA	

COACH
Rick Stockstill
10th year (57-55)
Career record: 57-55

Offensive coordinator: Buster Faulkner (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator: Tyrone Nix (fourth year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 6-6
Stadium: Johnny "Red" Floyd Stadium (30,788)
Tickets: 888-YES-MTSU
Site: Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Website: goblueraiders.com
Twitter: @MT_FB

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Austin Grammer (6-2, 205, Jr.)
RB Shane Tucker (6-0, 217, Jr.)
LT Carlos Johnson (6-3, 303, Fr.)
LG Darius Johnson (6-3, 305, Sr.)
C Josh Chester (6-3, 305, Jr.)
RG Daniel Stephens (6-2, 303, Jr.)
RT Maurquice Shakir (6-3, 318, Jr.)
TE Sean Smith (6-7, 241, Fr.)
WR Ed'Marques Batties (6-0, 197, Sr.)
WR Richie James (5-9, 170, Fr.)
WR Terry Pettis (6-5, 232, Jr.)

DEFENSE
DE Jahmal Jones (6-3, 238, So.)
DT Patrick McNeil (6-1, 320, Sr.)
DT Shaquille Huff (6-1, 320, Jr.)
DE Steven Rhodes (6-3, 256, Jr.)
LB Trey Wafford (5-10, 202, Sr.)
LB Cavellis Luckett (6-0, 254, Sr.)
LB T.T. Barber (6-1, 229, Sr.)
CB Jared Singletary (5-8, 173, Sr.)
CB Jamarcus Howard (6-0, 185, Sr.)
FS Xavier Walker (6-4, 212, Sr.)
SS Kevin Byard (5-11, 226, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS
K Cody Clark (6-1, 180, Jr.)
P Trevor Owens (6-2, 205, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

For the second time in three years, Middle Tennessee was left out of the bowl picture in 2014.

The Blue Raiders finished in second place in the East–ahead of WKU, which they beat–but the league has a rule that a seven-win team must receive a bowl invite before a six-win team. Middle should be a contender again. It has 16 starters back–eight on offense, eight on defense.

The Middle Tennessee attack revolved around what was the 30th-best rushing offense (213.8 yards per game) in the nation. Jordan Parker and Shane Tucker should get a heavier workload. Parker was second on the team in rushing (546 yards) and Tucker (486) third. Tucker is a versatile back, leading Middle with 12 total TDs. He also had 25 catches for 351 yards.

Austin Grammer's first year as a starter was solid. As a sophomore, he passed for 2,557 yards and 17 touchdowns and rushed for 442 yards and six scores. Grammer was also accurate, completing 65.4 percent of his passes–17th best in the nation.

Grammer's top returning wide receiver is Ed'Marques Batties (45 catches, 474 yards, 3 TDs).

Middle's defense struggled. The Blue Raiders fell from eighth in a 14-team league to third worst in terms of total yards given up (452.2 per game).

Senior linebacker T.T. Barber led Middle in tackles (72), including 7.5 tackles for loss, a sack, two interceptions and two forced fumbles. All-conference safety Kevin Byard tied for the league lead in interceptions with six and added 66 tackles.

BOTTOM LINE: Middle Tennessee has won at least five conference games in the past three seasons. With several returnees, the Blue Raiders should contend in the East–especially if they can fix their defensive woes.

4 OLD DOMINION
MONARCHS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@EASTERN MICHIGAN	17-3
S.12	Norfolk State	
S.19	N.C. State	34-46
S.26	Appalachian State	
O.3	@MARSHALL	14-56
O.17	Charlotte	
O.24	@FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL	38-35
O.31	Western Kentucky	51-66
N.7	@UTSA	
N.14	UTEP	35-42
N.21	@SOUTHERN MISS	
N.28	Florida Atlantic	31-28

COACH
Bobby Wilder
Seventh year (52-20)
Career record: 52-20

Offensive coordinator: Brian Scott (seventh year)
Defensive coordinator: Rich Nagy (third year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 6-6
Stadium: Foreman Field (20,118)
Tickets: 757-683-4444
Site: Norfolk, Va.
Website: odusports.com
Twitter: @ODUFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Shuler Bentley (6-1, 209, Fr.)
RB Ray Lawry (5-10, 205, So.)
LT Connor Mewbourne (6-4, 287, Sr.)
LG Tyler Fisher (6-3, 323, Jr.)
C Eli Kessner (6-2, 300, So.)
RG Tyler Burns (6-6, 370, Sr.)
RT Darius Garcia (6-3, 311, So.)
WR Zach Pascal (6-2, 217, Jr.)
WR David Washington (6-3, 209, Jr.)
WR Marques Little (5-9, 180, So.)
WR Blair Roberts (6-2, 203, Sr.)

DEFENSE
DE Poncho Barnwell (6-4, 270, Sr.)
DT Rashaad Coward (6-5, 297, Jr.)
DT Bunmi Rotimi (6-4, 283, So.)
DE Oshane Ximines (6-3, 239, Fr.)
LB Richard Thomas (6-0, 227, Jr.)
LB TJ Ricks (6-0, 226, Jr.)
LB Martez Simpson (6-1, 222, Sr.)
CB Devon Brown (5-11, 180, Jr.)
CB Lawrence Holley (6-2, 205, Fr.)
FS Justice Davila (6-0, 191, So.)
SS Fellonte Misher (6-2, 214, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS
K Satchel Ziffer (6-4, 206, Jr.)
P Jarrett Cervi (6-1, 219, So.)

Sporting News All-American

Old Dominion exceeded expectations in its inaugural season in C-USA. The Monarchs, picked fifth in the East, finished in a three-way tie for third. They won their final three games with close victories against Florida International, Louisiana Tech and Florida Atlantic. Their 30-27 overtime upset of Louisiana Tech was one of the league's bigger stunners.

Replacing quarterback Taylor Heinicke will be difficult. He was second in the league in passing yards per game (289.7), tied for third in TD passes (30) and fourth in completion percentage (63.2). He might be replaced by redshirt freshman Shuler Bentley, who was rated a four-star recruit by 247Sports.

Bentley will compete for the job along with juco transfer Joey Verhaegh. The Monarchs' top weapon is tailback Ray Lawry, the 2014 C-USA Freshman of the Year. He rushed for 947 yards and 16 touchdowns. Lawry led all Division 1 freshmen with 7.1 yards per carry.

The Monarchs bring back three of their top four receivers. Zach Pascal was second on the team with 59 receptions for 743 yards and seven touchdowns–all career bests. David Washington, a converted quarterback, had 47 receptions for 599 yards and four touchdowns.

Old Dominion's defense was second worst in the league in points allowed (38 per game) and their rushing defense was the worst (222.5 yards per game). Their 18 sacks were also second fewest. Linebacker TJ Ricks looks like an emerging star. The junior is the team's top returning tackler (80). He also had seven tackles for a loss and 2.5 sacks and forced a league-high four fumbles. Senior end Poncho Barnwell (34 tackles, 3.5 sacks) made an immediate impact as a juco transfer.

BOTTOM LINE: Without Heineke, the Monarchs may take a step back this year.

5 FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
PANTHERS

The Ron Turner Experience continues in Miami. The Panthers improved to 4-8 in 2014 after going 1-11 in his first season. In 11 seasons as a college head coach, Turner has had only three winning seasons, the last one coming in 2001 at Illinois.

Quarterback Alex McGough started all but one game as a freshman. McGough passed for 1,680 yards and 14 TDs with 10 interceptions. He threw three TD passes in the biggest win of the season—a 38-28 home victory over Middle Tennessee.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.5	@UCF
S.12	@INDIANA
S.19	North Carolina Central
S.26	@LOUISIANA TECH
O.3	@MASSACHUSETTS
O.10	UTEP
O.17	@MIDDLE TENNESSEE
O.24	Old Dominion
O.31	@FLORIDA ATLANTIC
N.7	Charlotte
N.14	@MARSHALL
N.21	Western Kentucky

Sophomore Alex Gardner rushed for 582 yards before missing the final four games due to injury. He set a school freshman record with 138 yards against Wagner and became the program's first freshman to notch multiple 100-yard rushing games. All-Conference USA tight end Jonnu Smith led the Panthers in receptions (61), yards (710) and TD catches (8).

The defense helped keep FIU competitive. The Panthers ranked 35th in the nation in total defense (363.8 yards per game). They ranked second in the FBS in fumble recoveries (19) and defensive TDs (6) and fifth in turnovers forced (33). But they lost defensive coordinator Josh Conklin to the same position at Pittsburgh.

Defensive back Richard Leonard scored three defensive touchdowns—tied for second most in the nation. He also recovered four fumbles, including a 100-yarder against Florida Atlantic. The all-conference cornerback and punt returner has scored six TDs in his career. Leonard is returning for his senior year after considering a jump to the NFL.

QUICK HITS — **2014 RECORD: 4-8**

Coach: Ron Turner (Third year, 5-19)
Career record: 47-80
Offensive coordinator: Steve Shankweiler (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Matt House (first year)

Stadium: FIU Stadium (20,000)
Tickets: 305-FIU-GAME
Site: Miami
Website: fiusports.com
Twitter: @FIUFootball

6 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
OWLS

Charlie Partridge's first season as coach at FAU was a struggle. The Owls were competitive at home, winning games over Tulsa, UTSA and Western Kentucky. But they went 0-7 on the road and were outscored 255-96 away from home.

The Owls have six returning starters on offense and six on defense.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.5	@TULSA
S.11	Miami (Fla.)
S.19	Buffalo
S.26	@CHARLOTTE
O.10	Rice
O.17	Marshall
O.24	@UTEP
O.31	Florida International
N.7	@WESTERN KENTUCKY
N.14	Middle Tennessee
N.21	@FLORIDA
N.28	@OLD DOMINION

Quarterback Jaquez Johnson was the 2013 Conference USA Newcomer of the Year. He wasn't quite as effective running the ball, gaining 513 rushing yards and seven scores compared to 772 and 10 TDs in 2013. Johnson, however, was a more efficient passer, throwing for 2,215 yards with 17 touchdowns and five interceptions.

Florida Atlantic will be counting on wide receivers Jenson Stoshak (37 catches, 508 yards) and Kalib Woods (16, 223) to contribute more. Junior-college tight end Chandler Dexter could also play a significant role.

Johnson

The defensive line could be a strength. The Owls will have Trevon Coley, Brandin Bryant and Trey Hendrickson up front. Hendrickson led the team in sacks (5) and was second in tackles for loss (10). Coley was second in sacks (4). Bryant will be returning from a knee injury that limited him to five games. The secondary will be keyed by cornerback Cre'von LeBlanc, who had two picks last year.

QUICK HITS — **2014 RECORD: 3-9**

Coach: Charlie Partridge (Second year, 3-9)
Career Record: 3-9
Offensive coordinator: Brian Wright (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator: Roc Bellantoni (second year)

Stadium: FAU Stadium (29,419)
Tickets: 866-FAU-OWLS
Site: Boca Raton, Fla.
Website: fausports.com
Twitter: @FAUOwlAthletics

7 CHARLOTTE
49ERS

Welcome to big-time football. After two seasons as an FCS independent, the 49ers are finally in the FBS as a C-USA member. Charlotte started its football program in 2013 and has been slowly and steadily building toward this moment.

Coach Brad Lambert will have nine starters back on offense, led by quarterback Matt Johnson. Johnson started the first eight games of last season until missing the rest of the year with a knee injury. As a sophomore, Johnson passed for 1,941 yards and 13 TDs with eight interceptions. He could be challenged for the job, though, by junior Lee McNeill, who played in his absence last year, and redshirt freshman Brooks Barden, a former three-star recruit.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.4	@GEORGIA STATE
S.12	Presbyterian
S.19	@MIDDLE TENNESSEE
S.26	Florida Atlantic
O.2	Temple
O.17	@OLD DOMINION
O.24	Southern Miss
O.31	Marshall
N.7	@FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
N.14	UTSA
N.21	@KENTUCKY
N.28	@RICE

Wide receiver should be a position of strength. Slot receiver Austin Duke enjoyed a breakthrough season in 2014 with 79 catches for 1,373 yards and nine scores. He should continue to be an impact player at the FBS level. The 49ers will add University of Georgia transfer Uriah LeMay, who sat out last season. The 6-2, 197-pounder had been rated as high as a four-star recruit coming out of prep power Butler High in Charlotte.

At running back, Kalif Phillips, who rushed for 1,436 yards and 20 TDs last season, could contend for all-conference honors.

The 49ers have eight starters back on defense and will be bolstered by three players coming back from injury: inside linebackers Caleb Clayton-Molby and Nick Cook and lineman Devon Johnson, who missed all of last year with an Achilles injury.

QUICK HITS — **2014 RECORD: 5-6**

Coach: Brad Lambert (Third year, 10-12)
Career Record: 10-12
Offensive coordinator: Jeff Mullen (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Matt Wallerstedt (first year)

Stadium: Jerry Richardson Stadium (15,000)
Tickets: 704-687-4949
Site: Charlotte
Website: charlotte49ers.com
Twitter: @Charlotte49ers

JOHNSON: NATI HARNIK / AP

LOUISIANA TECH
BULLDOGS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1

Jeff Driskel

Louisiana Tech made a sizable jump in Skip Holtz's second season. The Bulldogs were the fifth-most improved team in the FBS after going 4-8 in 2013. Picked to finish fourth in the West, they won the division by two games before falling to Marshall in the C-USA title game. The Bulldogs rebounded to beat Illinois in the Heart of Dallas Bowl, earning the third postseason victory in school history.

This must have been extremely satisfying for Holtz, who was fired from South Florida in December 2012. Louisiana Tech lost defensive coordinator Manny Diaz to Mississippi State. Safeties coach Blake Baker was promoted to take Diaz's place.

Former Florida quarterback Jeff Driskel will be among the most watched transfers in the nation. Driskel, the top quarterback recruit in the class of 2011, took considerable heat for the Gators' offensive failings in recent years.

Tech's senior tailback, Kenneth Dixon, is a touchdown waiting to happen. Dixon was the only FBS player to score in every game and became the first C-USA player to score at least one in 14 games in a season. Dixon finished with 28 TDs (22 rushing, 6 receiving)–third in the nation and second most ever in league play.

Tech's success was built on defense. The Bulldogs forced the most turnovers in the nation with 42. They were 34th in the FBS in yards allowed (362.5 per game) and 38th in points allowed (24.7). Their most impressive outing was when they completely stifled WKU in a 59-10 rout. They forced five turnovers and picked off Brandon Doughty four times.

Baker has some good pieces that should help keep the Bulldogs on top. Junior safety Xavier Woods was a first-team all-conference selection. He had six interceptions–tied for the league lead–including a 69-yard return for a score. His 230 yards in interception return yardage set a C-USA record. Fellow safety Kentrell Brice (86 stops) and Woods (71) are back as the team's two top tacklers.

BOTTOM LINE

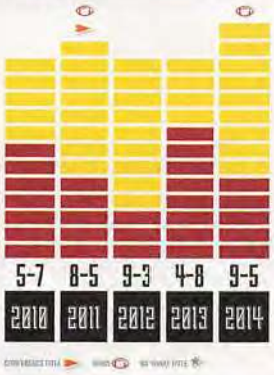
At Florida, Driskel played with considerable pressure. At Louisiana Tech, he just needs to fit in. If the Bulldogs defense remains strong and Dixon continues to score, they should be the team to beat in the West.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Jeff Driskel, QB

Driskel had a rough go of it last year as Florida's starting quarterback, getting benched in favor of freshman Treon Harris more than once during the second half of the year. But the 6-4 graduate transfer will have a solid hold on the starting spot with the Bulldogs and brings with him 3,411 career passing yards from the vaunted SEC. A career year is foremost on the mind of Driskel, who still expresses NFL aspirations.

5-YEAR RECORD 35-28



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

- QB Jeff Driskel (6-4, 234, Sr.)
- RB Kenneth Dixon (5-10, 212, Sr.)
- LT Jens Danielsen (6-4, 283, Sr.)
- LG David Mahaffey (5-4, 310, Jr.)
- C Kirby Wixson (6-4, 325, Sr.)
- RG Joseph Brunson (5-4, 302, Jr.)
- RT Josh Robinson (6-2, 301, Sr.)
- WR Trent Taylor (5-8, 175, Jr.)
- WR Carlos Henderson (5-11, 185, So.)
- WR Conner Smith (6-3, 201, Jr.)
- WR Paul Turner (5-11, 190, Sr.)

DEFENSE

- DE Deldrick Canty (6-2, 250, So.)
- DT Tyler Porter (5-11, 318, Sr.)
- DT Vernon Butler (6-3, 309, Sr.)
- DE Vontarrius Dora (5-4, 253, Sr.)
- LB Beau Fitte (6-0, 217, Sr.)
- LB Nick Thomason (6-1, 237, Sr.)
- LB C.J. Cleveland (6-1, 197, Sr.)
- CB Bryson Abraham (5-9, 174, Sr.)
- CB Adairius Barnes (5-11, 186, Sr.)
- S Kentrell Brice (5-11, 198, Sr.)
- S Xavier Woods (5-11, 188, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

- K Jonathan Barnes (5-9, 168, So.)
- P Logan McPherson (5-10, 177, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1. Johnny Shaw, S ★★★
2. Rashid Bonnette, ATH ★★★
3. J'Mar Smith, QB ★★★

The quarterback for the 2015 season might have arrived via transfer from Florida in the form of former five-star prospect Jeff Driskel, but one of the headliners for the incoming class is J'Mar Smith. The son of former Alabama and NFL defensive end Kenny Smith could be Tech's QB of the future. Conference USA's No. 3-ranked class included multiple three-star talents from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas. Safety Johnny Shaw was committed to TCU and Texas at various points in the process before signing with the Bulldogs.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
9.5	Southern	
9.10	@WESTERN KENTUCKY	59-10
9.19	@KANSAS STATE	
9.26	Florida International	
10.3	Louisiana	48-20
10.10	@UTSA	27-20
10.17	@MISSISSIPPI STATE	
10.24	Middle Tennessee	
10.30	@RICE	76-31
11.7	North Texas	42-21
11.21	@UTEP	55-3
11.28	Southern Miss	31-20

COACH

Skip Holtz
Third year (13-13)
Career record: 101-84

Offensive coordinator: Tony Petersen (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Blake Baker (first year)

FAST FACTS

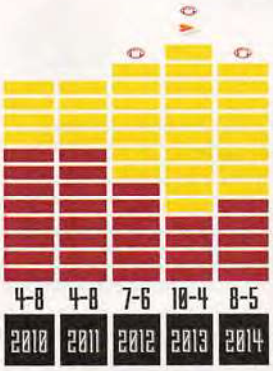
2014 RECORD: 9-5
(Beat Illinois in the Heart of Dallas Bowl, 35-18)
Stadium: Joe Aillet Stadium (30,600)
Tickets: 318-257-3631
Site: Ruston, La.
Website: latechsports.com
Twitter: @LaTechFB

Conference USA - West

DRISKEL: JOHN RAOUX / AP

RICE OWLS

5-YEAR RECORD 33-31



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Driphus Jackson (6-0, 210, Sr.)
RB Jowan Davis (5-7, 200, Jr.)
LT Brandon Dawkins (6-7, 310, Jr.)
LG Kenneth Thompson (6-4, 285, So.)
C Spencer Stanley (6-3, 290, Jr.)
RG Andrew Reue (6-5, 295, Sr.)
RT Caleb Williams (6-3, 295, Sr.)
TE Robby Wells III (6-6, 250, Jr.)
WR Zach Wright (6-1, 200, Jr.)
WR Dennis Parks (6-2, 200, Sr.)
WR Darrion Pollard (5-8, 190, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Brian Womac (6-3, 240, So.)
DT Cody Henessee (6-2, 265, Jr.)
NT Ross Winship (6-4, 290, Sr.)
DE Connor Johnson (6-2, 240, So.)
LB Alex Lyons (6-0, 225, Jr.)
LB Nick Uretsky (6-0, 225, So.)
CB J.T. Blasingame (5-9, 175, Jr.)
CB Ryan Pollard (5-8, 175, Sr.)
FS Garrett Fuhrman (5-8, 190, Sr.)
S Destri White (6-0, 205, So.)
S V.J. Banks (6-1, 185, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K Anthony Price (5-7, 180, So.)
P James Farrimond (6-0, 220, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Zach Abercrumbia,** DT ★★★
2. **Carl Thompson,** DT ★★★
3. **JT Granato,** QB ★★★

Rice's 2015 recruiting class boasts a pair of disruptive defensive tackles in Zach Abercrumbia and Carl Thompson who held more than 30 offers between them from programs in the ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and SEC. Quarterback JT Granato made headlines following his commitment to the Owls after they sent a recruiting letter to his cat, but the heady signal-caller's 9,000 passing yards and 81 TD passes over three seasons helped make him a target worthy of creative recruiting tactics.

Alex Lyons

LYONS: GREGORY PAYAN / AP

Rice wasn't able to repeat as league champion or win the West Division. The Owls still enjoyed a solid season and have made three straight bowl trips after defeating Fresno State 30-6 in the Hawaii Bowl.

These Owls will find out how good they are early. After the season opener at home against Wagner, they will have three straight road games (Texas, North Texas and Baylor) and will return home against Western Kentucky.

Last year, Rice amassed 5,190 yards of total offense, the fourth-highest single-season total in school history. Senior quarterback Driphus Jackson was the Hawaii Bowl MVP after setting a school bowl record with 318 passing yards and tying the record with three TD passes. In terms of pass efficiency, Jackson was third in the league (148.9) behind top guns Brandon Doughty (WKU) and Rakeem Cato (Marshall). He threw 24 TD passes to eight interceptions, completing 57.7 percent of his throws.

Rice has plenty of rushing options. Jowan Davis (956 yards, 6 TDs), Darik Dillard (652, 11) and Jackson (401, 1) can run the ball. That bodes well considering the Owls had the third-most rushing attempts in the league (571).

Rice finished with a league-high 39 sacks. Its three sacks per game were 13th in the nation. The Owls, however, lose their top three leading sack specialists. All-conference end Brian Nordstrom (7.5 sacks, 19.5 tackles for a loss), an Academic All-American, had a year of eligibility remaining but left to enter the business world.

All-Freshman Team member Graysen Schantz will be counted on to do more at defensive end. Linebacker Alex Lyons hopes to build on strong sophomore season. He led the Owls with 71 tackles, including a career-best 10 at Marshall. He was also a star on special teams.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Alex Lyons, LB

Lyons was the Owls' leading tackler last year (71) and is the only returnee among the six players who had more than 40 tackles. His emergence from backup to defensive leader in 2014 showed that he's on the uptick and can perform well with added expectations. The 6-0, 225-pound junior will maximize his skills and increase his importance to the team by getting into the backfield more this year; he had five tackles for loss, three sacks and three hurries last season.

BOTTOM LINE

Rice needs to fill some holes on defense. The Owls will go as far as Jackson takes them.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

2

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Wagner	
S.12	@TEXAS	
S.19	@NORTH TEXAS	41-21
S.26	@BAYLOR	
O.3	Western Kentucky	
O.10	@FLORIDA ATLANTIC	
O.24	Army	41-21
O.30	Louisiana Tech	31-76
N.6	@UTEP	31-13
N.14	Southern Miss	41-23
N.21	@UTSA	17-7
N.28	Charlotte	

COACH

David Bailiff
Ninth year (48-53)
Career record: 69-68

Offensive coordinators:
Larry Edmondson (second year)
Billy Lynch (second year)
Defensive coordinator:
Chris Thurmond (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Fresno State in the Hawaii Bowl, 30-6)
Stadium: Rice Stadium (47,000)
Tickets: 713-348-OWLS
Site: Houston
Website: riceowls.com
Twitter: @RiceFootball1

3 UTEP MINERS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@ARKANSAS	
S.12	@TEXAS TECH	26-30
S.19	@NEW MEXICO STATE	42-24
S.26	Incarnate Word	
O.3	UTSA	34-0
O.10	@FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL	
O.24	Florida Atlantic	
O.31	@SOUTHERN MISS	35-14
N.6	Rice	13-31
N.14	@OLD DOMINION	42-35
N.21	Louisiana Tech	3-55
N.28	@NORTH TEXAS	35-17

COACH

Sean Kugler
Third year (9-16)
Career record: 9-16
Offensive coordinator: Patrick Higgins (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Scott Stoker (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Utah State in the New Mexico Bowl, 21-6)
Stadium: Sun Bowl (51,500)
Tickets: 915-747-6150
Site: El Paso, Texas
Website: utepathletics.com
Twitter: @UTEPAthletics

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Mack Leftwich (5-10, 190, So.)
RB Aaron Jones (5-10, 185, Jr.)
FB Darrin Laufasa (6-1, 235, Jr.)
LT Chris Thummel (6-4, 280, So.)
LG Will Hernandez (6-3, 320, So.)
C Eric Lee (6-1, 295, Sr.)
RG Chris Thomas (6-4, 315, Jr.)
RT Jerome Daniels (6-3, 295, Jr.)
TE M.J. McFarland (6-5, 250, Sr.)
WR Cole Freytag (6-2, 195, Jr.)
WR Tyler Batson (6-0, 195, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Nick Usher (6-3, 235, Jr.)
DT Alex Villarreal (6-4, 300, Sr.)
NT Gino Bresolin (6-2, 285, Jr.)
DE Roy Robertson-Harris (6-7, 255, Sr.)
LB Jimmy Musgrave (6-0, 240, Sr.)
LB Alvin Jones (5-11, 215, So.)
CB Traun Roberson (6-0, 195, Sr.)
CB Ishmael Harrison (6-0, 195, Sr.)
FS Devin Cockrell (5-11, 190, Jr.)
SS LaQuintus Dowell (5-10, 205, Sr.)
DB Adrian Hynson (5-10, 185, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Jay Mattox (6-0, 185, Jr.)
P Jay Mattox (6-0, 185, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

UTEP was one of the biggest shockers in C-USA last season. The Miners, picked last in the West, had their first winning campaign in nine years. They went from 2-10 to one of the biggest turnarounds in the FBS. They reached the Gildan New Mexico Bowl, where they lost to Utah State.

Now comes the hard part for coach Sean Kugler: sustaining the success.

The offense will center around tailback Aaron Jones. He rushed for 1,321 yards and scored 14 touchdowns (11 rushing). Jones was 24th in the nation in rushing yards per game (110.1). UTEP will need to find a new quarterback to replace Jameill Showers. Mack Leftwich (5-10, 190 pounds) started the final four games of 2013 as a freshman but redshirted last year. On the other end of the height spectrum at QB is 6-7 Garrett Simpson, who saw action in three games.

The Miners picked up University of Texas transfer M.J. McFarland at tight end. As a graduate student, he is eligible to play immediately. He started four games last season with the Longhorns, with 11 catches for 53 yards and two touchdowns.

UTEP has seven returning starters on a defense that ranked 15th nationally in passing yards allowed (191.2 per game). Lineman Roy Robertson-Harris was a force. He led the team in tackles for loss (9.5), sacks (3.5) and forced fumbles (4). Defensive back Devin Cockrell was third on the team with 52 tackles, third in tackles for loss (7.0), had two sacks and an interception.

BOTTOM LINE If UTEP's defense can keep the team in games, the Miners will have a chance.

4 SOUTHERN MISS GOLDEN EAGLES

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Mississippi State	0-49
S.12	Austin Peay	
S.19	@TEXAS STATE	
S.26	@NEBRASKA	
O.3	North Texas	30-20
O.9	@MARSHALL	17-63
O.17	UTSA	10-12
O.24	@CHARLOTTE	
O.31	UTEP	14-35
N.14	@RICE	23-41
N.21	Old Dominion	
N.28	@LOUISIANA TECH	20-31

COACH

Todd Monken
Third year (4-20)
Career record: 4-20
Offensive coordinator: Chip Lindsey (second year)
Defensive coordinator: David Duggan (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: M.M. Roberts Stadium (36,000)
Tickets: 800-844-TICK
Site: Hattiesburg, Miss.
Website: southernmiss.com
Twitter: @SouthernMissFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Nick Mullens (6-1, 196, Jr.)
RB Ito Smith (5-9, 182, So.)
FB Daythan Davis (6-1, 228, So.)
LT Rashod Hill (6-6, 302, Sr.)
LG Brandon Farmer (6-2, 308, Jr.)
C Cameron Tom (6-4, 287, Jr.)
RG Devin Farrior (6-4, 304, So.)
RT Norman Price (6-4, 321, Sr.)
WR Marquise Ricard (6-2, 192, Jr.)
WR Michael Thomas (6-1, 186, Sr.)
WR Casey Martin (5-10, 175, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Michael Smith (6-4, 277, Sr.)
DT Draper Riley (6-4, 289, So.)
DT Rod Crayton (6-1, 287, So.)
DE Dylan Bradley (6-1, 265, Jr.)
LB Brian Anderson (5-10, 248, Sr.)
LB Elijah Parker (6-2, 208, Jr.)
LB Terrick Wright (6-2, 228, Sr.)
CB Picasso Nelson Jr. (5-10, 187, So.)
CB Kalan Reed (5-11, 191, Sr.)
DB Cornell Armstrong (5-11, 175, So.)
S D'Nerius Antoine (6-0, 231, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Kewin Nielsen (5-10, 182, Sr.)
P Tyler Sarrazin (6-3, 204, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

Could this be the season that Southern Miss makes the jump back to respectability? The Golden Eagles were 12-2 in Larry Fedora's final season in 2011 and were ranked in both Top 25 polls. Since then, the program went winless under Ellis Johnson in 2012 and has a grand total of four victories in Todd Monken's two seasons.

This season, the Golden Eagles will have 10 returning starters on offense and some key pieces back on defense.

Quarterback Nick Mullens showed some improvement as a sophomore. After being named to the 2013 Conference USA All-Freshman team, last year Mullens passed for 2,470 yards with 12 touchdowns to nine interceptions. Watch out for TCU transfer Tyler Matthews. He sat out last season after leaving the Horned Frogs but was a four-star recruit out of high school.

Southern Miss has two promising starting receivers. Michael Thomas (41 catches, 592 yards, 5 TDs) and Casey Martin (55, 531, 2) were both All-Conference USA honorable mention. In the backfield, the top four rushers are back, led by Ito Smith (536 yards).

This unit suffered a loss when defensive tackle Rakeem Nunez-Roches declared for the NFL Draft with a year of eligibility remaining. That's a blow for a defense that was already giving up 35.4 points per game. Defensive back Cornell Armstrong was a member of the league's All-Freshman Team. He had four pass breakups and recovered a fumble. Cornerback Kalan Reed tied for the team lead in interceptions (2) and led the team with nine passes broken up.

BOTTOM LINE Southern Miss should be improved. Will that mean five victories or seven? It's tough to say.

5 NORTH TEXAS
MEAN GREEN

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.17	@SMU	43-6
S.19	Rice	21-41
S.26	@IOWA	
O.3	@SOUTHERN MISS	20-30
O.10	Portland State	
O.15	Western Kentucky	
O.24	@MARSHALL	
O.31	UTSA	27-34
N.7	@LOUISIANA TECH	21-42
N.14	@TENNESSEE	
N.21	@MIDDLE TENNESSEE	
N.28	UTEP	17-35

COACH
Dan McCarney
Fifth year (22-27)
Career record: 78-112

Offensive coordinator: Mike Canales (sixth year)
Defensive coordinator: Chris Cosh (first year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 4-8
Stadium: Apogee Stadium (30,850)
Tickets: 800-868-2366
Site: Denton, Texas
Website: meangreensports.com
Twitter: @MeanGreenFB

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Andrew McNulty (6-1, 209, Sr.)
RB Antoinne Jimmerson (5-9, 222, Sr.)
LT Michael Banogu (6-5, 282, Sr.)
LG Sam Rice (6-4, 302, Jr.)
C Kaydon Kirby (6-3, 329, Jr.)
RG Brian Ochs (6-4, 300, Jr.)
RT Micah Thompson (6-4, 310, Sr.)
TE Marcus Smith (6-4, 247, Sr.)
WR Turner Smiley (6-0, 185, So.)
WR Carlos Harris (5-8, 183, Sr.)
WR Darvin Kidsy (6-0, 182, Jr.)

DEFENSE
DE Jarrian Roberts (6-2, 240, Jr.)
DT Austin Orr (6-4, 277, Sr.)
DT Sir Calvin Wallace (6-2, 296, Jr.)
DE Chad Polk (6-0, 231, Sr.)
LB Calvin Minor (6-3, 219, So.)
LB Fred Scott (5-11, 238, Jr.)
LB Blake Bean (6-1, 218, Sr.)
CB Kenny Buyers (5-11, 186, Sr.)
CB Jamal Marshall (6-3, 203, Sr.)
FS Kishawn McClain (5-11, 193, So.)
SS John Schilleci (6-0, 200, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS
K Trevor Moore (5-11, 175, So.)
P Eric Keena (6-2, 170, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

North Texas has been up and down in recent seasons. In 2012, the Mean Green went 4-8. The following season, they improved to 9-4 and then came last year's clunker. After opening up 2-2, UNT's lone conference victories came against the Florida schools. The Mean Green's worst loss was a 56-21 beatdown at UAB.

The Mean Green must contend with a difficult schedule. In conference, North Texas will play Western Kentucky, Marshall, Middle Tennessee and Louisiana Tech. Out of conference, the Mean Green will visit Iowa and Tennessee. North Texas will have five home games, but only one in November.

The quarterback position was a revolving door last season. Andrew McNulty started the final six games and is the leading returning passer in terms of yards (1,295), but he threw six TDs to seven interceptions last season as a junior. Junior Josh Greer started the first three games and sophomore Dajon Williams also started three last season. Redshirt freshman Connor Means and juco transfer Damarcus Smith will also compete for the job.

Another big problem could be the offensive line, which lost four starters. Only center Kaydon Kirby returns.

North Texas has a new defensive coordinator in Chris Cosh, who has been a coordinator for 16 of his 30 coaching seasons with stops at Kansas State, Maryland, South Carolina, Michigan State and Illinois. In the secondary, the Mean Green expects to get immediate impacts from former UAB player Jakii Moore as a transfer and junior-college newcomer James Gray. Senior end Chad Polk (5.5 sacks) is the best returnee on defense.

BOTTOM LINE: North Texas could be improved. But with so many unknowns and a tough schedule, it'll be a challenge to have a better record.

6 UTSA
ROADRUNNERS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	@ARIZONA	23-26
S.12	Kansas State	
S.19	@OKLAHOMA STATE	13-43
S.26	Colorado State	
O.3	@UTEP	0-34
O.10	Louisiana Tech	20-27
O.17	@SOUTHERN MISS	12-10
O.31	@NORTH TEXAS	34-27
N.7	Old Dominion	
N.14	@CHARLOTTE	
N.21	Rice	7-17
N.28	Middle Tennessee	

COACH
Larry Coker
Fifth year (23-23)
Career record: 83-38

Offensive coordinator: Kevin Brown (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator: Neal Neathery (fifth year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 4-8
Stadium: Alamodome (65,000)
Tickets: 210-458-UTSA
Site: San Antonio
Website: goutsa.com
Twitter: @UTSAFTBL

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Blake Bogenschutz (6-1, 180, Fr.)
TB Jarveon Williams (5-9, 200, Jr.)
LT Reed Darragh (6-4, 290, So.)
LG Cody Cole (6-5, 290, So.)
C Juan Perez (6-2, 270, So.)
RG William Cavanaugh (6-1, 310, Sr.)
RT Jordan Gray (6-2, 260, Sr.)
TE David Morgan II (6-4, 250, Sr.)
WR Kenny Bias (6-1, 180, Sr.)
WR Kerry Thomas Jr. (6-0, 200, So.)
WR Aaron Grubb (5-8, 170, Sr.)

DEFENSE
DE Marcus Davenport (6-6, 215, So.)
DT Brian Price (6-3, 310, Sr.)
DT Vontrell King-Williams (6-2, 325, Jr.)
DE Jason Neill (6-2, 260, Sr.)
LB Drew Douglas (6-1, 230, Sr.)
LB Marcos Curry (5-11, 210, So.)
CB Bennett Okotcha (6-0, 195, Sr.)
CB Trevor Baker (6-2, 195, Sr.)
S Michael Egwuagu (6-0, 215, Jr.)
S Mauricio Sanchez (6-0, 200, Sr.)
S Nate Gaines (6-2, 175, So.)

SPECIALISTS
K Daniel Portillo (6-0, 170, So.)
P Yannis Routsas (6-4, 195, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

The Roadrunners were supposed to be a C-USA contender last season but never recovered from a 1-4 league start and a flurry of quarterback injuries. They couldn't score (17.1 ppg, tied for seventh worst in the nation). Texas-San Antonio will be in full rebuilding mode after losing 36 seniors.

This was by far Larry Coker's worst season for the start-up football program that began as an FCS independent in 2011. Now in their third season in the league, the Roadrunners will try to develop for the long term. They have only six returning starters.

Michigan transfer Russell Bellomy, a graduate student and a Texas native, is eligible immediately. Bellomy barely played at Michigan but he still likely will be a significant upgrade for one of the worst passing offenses in the nation. The Roadrunners were near the bottom of the FBS with seven TD passes. Redshirt freshman Blake Bogenschutz and sophomore Austin Robinson (4 starts) will also be in the quarterback competition. Tight end David Morgan II (20 catches, 255 yards, 1 TD) is a reliable target.

The defense could be solid with linebacker Drew Douglas, safety Michael Egwuagu, end Jason Neill and cornerback Bennett Okotcha. Douglas was third on the team in tackles (71) and had seven tackles for a loss. Neill tied for the team lead with 3.5 sacks.

BOTTOM LINE: Unless Bellomy turns out to be an underutilized stud, it's hard not to imagine UTSA struggling again. The offense doesn't have any established weapons and the defense may not be good enough to make up the difference.

Western Michigan coach P.J. Fleck

Who needs Harbaugh? WMU Broncos may be the talk of Michigan this season

BY RODNEY MCKISSIC | *Sporting News Yearbooks correspondent*

They're absolutely giddy in Michigan about football these days. Western Michigan football, no less. If ever there was a team to stop the dominance of Northern Illinois, the Broncos would be the front-runner.

The Broncos' offense is loaded with skill in tailback Jarvion Franklin and wide receiver Corey Davis. All-league linemen Willie Beavers and James Kristof are back not to mention a proven quarterback in Zach Terrell. The defense lacks the star power of the offense yet ranked No. 2 in the MAC in 2014 and returns key contributors like defensive end Jarrell McKinney, middle linebacker Grant DePalma and cornerback Ronald Zamort.

The scary part about Western Michigan, which finished with an 8-5 overall record and 6-2 in conference play with a bowl berth a season ago, is that everyone believed the Broncos were a year away from being merely competitive because they played so many freshmen and sophomores in key positions.

"Sometimes with young players they don't know how good they are and they don't know how bad they're supposed to be," Western Michigan coach P.J. Fleck says. "We had a saying in our program that we have a 'Race to Maturity.' We had to become mature way faster than anyone else and they had to play like seniors in their freshmen year."

Fleck's speedy transformation of Western Michigan has been remarkable and the upshot noteworthy. The Broncos stammered to 1-11 in Fleck's first season but he still inked the highest-ranked recruiting class in MAC history. He signed the league's top rated class again in 2015. With success come expectations.

"The future is bright but we're not as close as where we need to be just because we went 8-5," Fleck states. "All we're looking at is the next step in this six-to-eight-year plan."

Teams most notably on Western Michigan's heels are Toledo and, naturally, Northern Illinois, whose string of three championships over the last four seasons evokes memories of when Marshall ran roughshod over the league a decade ago. Marshall forced each team within the league to upgrade their program and in essence Northern Illinois is doing the same thing. Perhaps it's not a coincidence that Fleck played wide receiver at Northern Illinois from 1999-2003 under Joe Novak, the man credited for changing the culture in DeKalb.

A similar phenomenon is happening in Kalamazoo.

PROJECTED FINISH

East Division

1. **Bowling Green**
   Bowl Projection: Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
2. **Akron**
   Bowl Projection: Bahamas Bowl
3. **Ohio**
4. **Buffalo**
5. **Massachusetts**
6. **Kent State**
7. **Miami (Ohio)**

West Division

1. **Western Michigan**
   Bowl Projection: GoDaddy Bowl
2. **Toledo**
   Bowl Projection: Camellia Bowl
3. **Northern Illinois**
   Bowl Projection: Boca Raton Bowl
4. **Ball State**
5. **Central Michigan**
6. **Eastern Michigan**

Blake Frohnapfel, QB, UMass

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

Zips' drive: Akron has never won more than seven games in its FBS history, but with a favorable schedule that could change this year.

FLECK: STEW MILNE / AP; FROHNAPFEL: MARK HUMPHREY / AP; FRANKLIN: LOREN ORR / ICON SPORTSWIRE; HUNT: DAVID RICHARD / AP

2015 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Barton Simmons, 247Sports

247 SPORTS COMPOSITE

RANK	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	POINTS
1	Western Michigan	27	0	0	13	148.39
2	Miami (Ohio)	29	0	1	14	148.27
3	Toledo	25	0	0	11	138.97
4	Northern Illinois	31	0	0	11	135.87
5	Ohio	25	0	0	11	128.87
6	Central Michigan	20	0	0	10	125.69
7	Kent State	22	0	0	8	123.17
8	Massachusetts	22	0	0	7	120.17
9	Bowling Green	24	0	0	5	116.77
10	Eastern Michigan	27	0	0	8	115.18
11	Ball State	25	0	0	6	114.14
12	Buffalo	19	0	0	4	103.22
13	Akron	17	0	0	1	81.47

ALL-MAC

OFFENSE

- QB **Blake Frohnapfel,** Sr., Massachusetts
- RB **Jarvion Franklin,** So., Western Michigan
- RB **Kareem Hunt,** Jr., Toledo
- OL **Nick Beamish,** Sr., Central Michigan
- OL **Alex Huettel,** Sr., Bowling Green
- OL **Andrew Ness,** Sr., Northern Illinois
- OL **Willie Beavers,** Sr., Western Michigan
- OL **James Kristof,** Sr., Western Michigan
- TE **Rodney Mills,** Jr., Massachusetts
- WR **Tajae Sharpe,** Jr., Massachusetts
- WR **Corey Davis,** Jr., Western Michigan

DEFENSE

- DL **Perez Ford,** Sr., Northern Illinois
- DL **Pat O'Connor,** Sr., Eastern Michigan
- DL **Cody Grice,** Sr., Akron
- DL **Tarell Basham,** Jr., Ohio
- LB **Jatavis Brown,** Sr., Akron
- LB **Jovan Santos-Knox,** Jr., Massachusetts
- LB **Great Ibe,** Sr., Eastern Michigan
- DB **Paris Logan,** Sr., Northern Illinois
- DB **Randall Jette,** Jr., Massachusetts
- DB **Nate Holley,** Jr., Kent State
- DB **Tony Annese,** Jr., Central Michigan

SPECIALISTS

- K **Tyler Tate,** Sr., Bowling Green
- P **Anthony Melchiori,** Sr., Kent State

PRESEASON MVP

Franklin set the tone for the Broncos' resurgence by setting the MAC freshman single-season rushing record with 1,551 yards, which also ranked 16th nationally. Tack on 24 rushing touchdowns, fourth in the country and third in MAC history, and the only question now is: What will he do for an encore?

Jarvion Franklin

OVERRATED

OHIO

While Ohio has experience on both sides of the ball, the Bobcats' record has taken a nosedive in each of the last three seasons.

UNDERRATED

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts is in its final season in the MAC, but the one-time laughingstock has plenty of offensive weapons, making bowl eligibility a realistic goal.

2 Hard times for Haynes: The clock is ticking on Kent State coach Paul Haynes. He inherited a program coming off an 11-win season but has won just six games in two years.

3 RedHawks need recipe: While several teams have questions at quarterback, only Miami (Ohio) is starting from scratch under center.

Kareem Hunt, RB, Toledo

RATING THE MAC

FASTEST RECEIVER
Corey Davis, Western Michigan
Could be the league's most explosive player.

BEST HANDS
Daniel Braverman, WR, Western Michigan
Caught a MAC-high 86 passes in 13 games.

BEST PASSING QB
Blake Frohnapfel, Massachusetts
Has strong pocket presence, a strong arm and could play on Sundays.

BEST RUNNING QB
Drew Hare, Northern Illinois
Rushed for 900 yards to finish in the league's top 10.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Kareem Hunt, Toledo
Averaged 163.1 yards per game.

BEST INSTINCTS
Drew Hare, QB, Northern Illinois
Is underrated at sitting in the pocket and then taking off to avoid trouble.

BEST ATHLETE
Jarvion Franklin, RB, Western Michigan
League's top offensive player as a freshman last season.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED (OFF THE FIELD)
Tony Daniel, QB, Buffalo
Wouldn't be surprising if he becomes an athletic director within the next 10 years.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Tyler Tate, K, Bowling Green
Has knocked down 79 percent of his 61 field-goal attempts entering his senior campaign for the Falcons.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Tajae Sharpe, WR, Massachusetts
Scouts love the way he stretches the field.

TOP IMPACT FROSH
Justin Tranquill, S, Western Michigan
Too athletic and talented not to find his way on the field early.

HARDEST HITTER
Trent Voss, DE, Toledo
Posted 77 tackles overall including 15 tackles for a loss.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Anthone Taylor, RB, Buffalo
A backup to Branden Oliver as a sophomore, Taylor burst onto the scene in 2014 with 1,403 yards rushing.

BEST INTERVIEW
Dino Babers, head coach, Bowling Green
His offense is just like his personality: Lotsa fun.

BEST COACH AS STRATEGIST
Frank Solich, Ohio
Bobcats have finished under .500 just twice since 2005.

BEST COACH AS RECRUITER
P.J. Fleck, Western Michigan
This isn't even close. Fleck has pieced together a pair of Top 60 recruiting classes.

HOTTEST SEAT
Paul Haynes, Kent State
Just 6-17 in two seasons and 4-11 in league play. It's time to start showing some progress.

BEST VENUE
Waldo Stadium, Western Michigan
It helps having an exciting team on the rise.

BOWLING GREEN

FALCONS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1

Matt Johnson

The boys down in Columbus aren't the only team in Ohio with a fantastic competition at quarterback. Bowling Green has two quarterbacks in Matt Johnson and James Knapke who have started and are awash with experience, plus a third in Cody Callaway. Toss in James Morgan, a big-armed true freshman from Green Bay, Wis., and second-year coach Dino Babers can kick back and watch his starter rise to the top.

"I would be very surprised," Babers says, "if we weren't better."

With nine starters returning on offense, Babers can place virtually anyone behind center and the offense would purr, although the safe bet would be Johnson, the MAC preseason Player of the Year in 2014 who started the opener before suffering a season-ending injury.

Tailback Travis Greene, who rushed for 949 yards and scored 12 touchdowns, is back, but he'll be challenged by Georgia Tech transfer Donovan Wilson and true freshman Matt Domer, who originally signed with Illinois but failed to gain admission. The best in the receiving corps is Roger Lewis, who finished with 1,093 receiving yards and seven touchdowns, but Babers expects true freshmen Brandon Harris, Scotty Miller, Deric Phouthavong and Janarvis Pough to emerge as significant backups, if not starters. The offensive line, led by right guard Alex Huettel, returns intact.

The Falcons hired a new defensive coordinator in Brian Ward from Western Illinois, which ranked seventh nationally in the FCS in total defense in 2013. Bowling Green, which will run a 4-3 scheme under Ward, has to replace seven starters but were so riddled by injuries that the backups received plenty of minutes and Babers hopes that experience carries over. There are depth concerns along the defensive line, which features three seniors in ends Bryan Baird and Zach Colvin, who missed all of last season, and tackle Gus Schwieterman. The linebackers and safeties are young but there's experience at corner with Darrell Hunter II and Will Watson. Second-team All-MAC corner Nick Johnson was suspended at press time for various run-ins with the law in spring.

BOTTOM LINE

Johnson's return at quarterback will be the biggest plot for Bowling Green heading into 2015. If he can duplicate his magical 2013 season, the Falcons have a good shot at threatening for the conference championship.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Matt Johnson, QB

Johnson suffered a season-ending hip injury in the opener last year, but for good reason he was named the MAC preseason Player of the Year coming into 2014. Two years ago, Johnson threw for 3,467 yards and 25 touchdowns with a 64.2 passing percentage. He sought to fulfill expectations, going 25-for-36 for 313 passing yards in his one appearance last season. He'll get another shot at Player-of-the-Year hardware this season.

MAC - East

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Tennessee (at Nashville, TN)	
S.12	@MARYLAND	
S.19	Memphis	
S.26	@PURDUE	
O.3	@BUFFALO	36-35
O.10	Massachusetts	47-42
O.17	Akron	27-10
O.24	@KENT STATE	30-20
N.4	Ohio	31-13
N.11	@WESTERN MICHIGAN	14-26
N.17	Toledo	20-27
N.24	@BALL STATE	24-41

COACH

Dino Babers
Second year (8-6)
Career record: 27-13

Offensive coordinators: Mike Lynch (first year) and Sean Lewis (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Brian Ward (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-6
(Beat South Alabama in the Camellia Bowl, 33-28)
Stadium: Doyt L. Perry Stadium (24,000)
Tickets: 419-372-0000
Site: Bowling Green, Ohio
Website: bgsufalcons.com
Twitter: @BG_Football

5-YEAR RECORD 33-32

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Matt Johnson (6-0, 221, Sr.)
RB	Travis Greene (5-10, 183, Sr.)
LT	Jacob Bennett (6-5, 332, Jr.)
LG	Ben Steward (6-6, 300, Jr.)
C	Tim McAuliffe (6-0, 274, So.)
RG	Alex Huettel (6-4, 309, Sr.)
RT	Logan Dietz (6-6, 298, Jr.)
TE	Derek Lee (6-4, 255, Sr.)
WR	Ryan Burbrink (5-8, 183, Sr.)
WR	Ronnie Moore (5-9, 168, Jr.)
WR	Roger Lewis (6-0, 196, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Bryan Baird (6-4, 238, Sr.)
NG	Taylor Royster (5-10, 255, Sr.)
DT	Gus Schwieterman (6-2, 261, So.)
DE	Zach Colvin (6-3, 287, Sr.)
OLB	Austin Valdez (6-0, 226, Fr.)
MLB	Nate Locke (6-0, 227, Fr.)
OLB	James Sanford (6-1, 194, Jr.)
CB	Darrell Hunter II (5-9, 178, Sr.)
CB	Will Watson (5-11, 179, Sr.)
FS	Dernard Turner (6-0, 189, Sr.)
SS	Isaiah Gourdine (6-2, 198, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Tyler Tate (6-0, 185, Sr.)
P	Joe Davidson (6-7, 220, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1 • **James Morgan,** QB ★★★
2 • **Antonyo Sotolongo,** S ★★★
3 • **Shemar Moss,** DE ★★★

In coach Dino Babers' wide-open passing attack, quarterback commit James Morgan could throw his way into the NFL Draft one day. With size, a live arm and athleticism, Morgan is one of the top mid-major steals in the country and has the ability to play anywhere. Bowling Green looked to Florida for eight prospects, led by safety Antonyo Sotolongo, and 11 prospects from Ohio, including sleeper DT Nico Lauten.

JOHNSON: CARLOS OSORIO/AP

2 AKRON ZIPS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@OKLAHOMA	
S.12	Pittsburgh	21-10
S.19	Savannah State	
S.26	@LOUISIANA	
O.3	Ohio	20-23
O.10	@EASTERN MICHIGAN	31-6
O.17	@BOWLING GREEN	10-27
O.31	Central Michigan	
N.7	@MASSACHUSETTS	30-6
N.14	@MIAMI (OH)	29-19
N.21	Buffalo	24-55
N.27	Kent State	24-27

COACH

Terry Bowden
Fourth year (11-25)
Career record: 151-87-2

Offensive coordinator:
A.J. Milwee (third year)
Defensive coordinator:
Chuck Amato (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 5-7
Stadium: InfoCision Stadium (30,000)
Tickets: 888-99-AKRON
Site: Akron, Ohio
Website: gozips.com
Twitter: @ZipsFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Kyle Pohl (6-3, 217, Sr.)
RB Conor Hundley (5-10, 213, Sr.)
LT Isaiah Williams (6-3, 295, Sr.)
LG Dylan Brumbaugh (6-5, 309, Sr.)
C Stephen Ericksen (6-3, 305, So.)
RG Tommy Brown (6-4, 310, Sr.)
RT Quaison Osborne (6-3, 295, Sr.)
TE Newman Williams (6-2, 240, Fr.)
WR Andrew Pratt (6-5, 210, Sr.)
WR Austin Wolf (6-3, 200, So.)
WR Imani Davis (5-9, 176, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Se'Von Pittman (6-3, 268, Jr.)
DT Rodney Coe (6-3, 305, Sr.)
DT Cody Grice (5-11, 284, Sr.)
DE Jamal Marcus (6-2, 240, Jr.)
OLB Dylan Evans (6-2, 211, Sr.)
MLB John Rachal (5-11, 225, Jr.)
OLB Jatavis Brown (5-11, 217, Sr.)
CB Larry Hope (6-0, 183, Jr.)
CB DeAndre Scott (5-11, 180, Jr.)
FS Jerome Lane (6-3, 212, So.)
SS Zach Guiser (6-1, 205, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K Robert Stein (5-8, 169, Sr.)
P Zach Paul (6-3, 216, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

The talk around northeast Ohio these days is not only bowl eligibility but contending for a league championship. It's a tall order but a realistic goal for fourth-year coach Terry Bowden, who has assembled a roster inundated with transfers to create more competition.

The Zips must become solidified at quarterback and while Kyle Pohl is the leader to win the job heading into training camp, Pitt transfer Tra'Von Chapman is a tantalizing option. Chapman has great running and throwing skills and will immediately challenge Pohl. Tailback Conor Hundley will be in competition with Colorado State transfer Donnell Alexander, who averaged 6.0 yards a carry two years ago. The wideouts are top-notch with Andrew Pratt, Austin Wolf and Imani Davis.

The Zips paced the conference in scoring defense (23.1 ppg) led by all-conference linebacker Jatavis Brown. Bowden compares him favorably to former NFL linebacker Takeo Spikes, who starred for Bowden when he was head coach at Auburn. Run-stuffing nose tackle Cody Grice is back and he'll once again see time at tailback in key situations. Ohio State transfer Jamal Marcus will play at end along with Se'Von Pittman, while Washington State transfer Darryl Monroe hopes to gain minutes at middle linebacker where John Rachal is penciled in as starter. Another transfer, Rodney Coe from Iowa State, is slated to start at tackle.

Akron lost its top three safeties but Bowden is high on replacements Jerome Lane and Zach Guiser.

BOTTOM LINE: An influx of transfers gives the Zips a chance to contend for the MAC title for the first time in a decade.

3 OHIO BOBCATS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	@IDAHO	36-24
S.12	Marshall	14-44
S.19	Southeastern Louisiana	
S.26	@MINNESOTA	
O.3	@AKRON	23-20
O.10	Miami (OH)	24-21
O.17	Western Michigan	21-42
O.24	@BUFFALO	37-14
N.4	@BOWLING GREEN	13-31
N.10	Kent State	17-14
N.17	Ball State	
N.24	@NORTHERN ILLINOIS	14-21

COACH

Frank Solich
11th year (72-56)
Career record: 130-75

Offensive coordinators:
Tim Albin (11th year)
Scott Isphording (second year)
Defensive coordinator:
Jimmy Burrow (11th year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 6-6
Stadium: Peden Stadium (24,000)
Tickets: 800-575-2287
Site: Athens, Ohio
Website: ohiobobcats.com
Twitter: @OhioFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Derrius Vick (6-1, 196, Sr.)
RB A.J. Ouellette (5-10, 195, So.)
LT Mike McQueen (6-6, 287, Sr.)
LG Mike Lucas (6-4, 313, Sr.)
C Lucas Powell (6-3, 296, Sr.)
RG Joe Anderson (6-6, 320, So.)
RT Troy Watson (6-6, 293, Jr.)
TE Troy Mangen (6-5, 252, Jr.)
WR Sebastian Smith (6-3, 183, Jr.)
WR Jordan Reid (6-3, 198, Jr.)
WR Brendan Cope (6-2, 189, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Casey Sayles (6-3, 268, Jr.)
NG Watson Tautuiaki (6-2, 304, Sr.)
DT Tony Porter (6-1, 289, So.)
DE Tarell Basham (6-4, 250, Jr.)
OLB Blair Brown (6-0, 230, Jr.)
MLB Quentin Polling (6-0, 219, So.)
OLB Jovon Johnson (6-0, 215, Sr.)
CB Ian Wells (5-11, 202, Sr.)
CB Devin Bass (5-9, 190, Sr.)
FS Blake Scipio (5-11, 187, Jr.)
SS Devin Jones (6-1, 202, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Josiah Yazdani (5-10, 216, Sr.)
P Mitch Bonnstetter (5-11, 187, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Ohio has been on a steady decline since 2011 and won't attract much attention this time around, either. And that's fine with coach Frank Solich, who would prefer to fly under the radar and pull a surprise or two as the season progresses. The Bobcats should be good enough to be a dark-horse league challenger if–and it's a big "if"–they find some answers at quarterback. Derrius Vick and JD Sprague are gifted runners but neither is going to be mistaken for a drop-back passer–they combined to complete just 53 percent of their passes last season.

To offset a questionable passing game, A.J. Ouellette is back after rushing for 785 yards and seven touchdowns. He has decent size and possesses breakaway speed. A rickety passing game notwithstanding, wideouts Sebastian Smith, Jordan Reid and Brendan Cope are solid but keep an eye on freshmen Elijah Ball and Kyle Belack, who can stretch the field. The offensive line returns virtually intact.

The Bobcats ranked No. 2 in the MAC in scoring defense, fifth overall in total defense and most of the key contributors return. Junior ends Tarell Basham and Casey Sayles are pure edge rushers but tackles Cameron McLeod and Antwan Crutcher, who gave the Bobcats a push inside, must be replaced. Both Quentin Polling and Jovon Johnson lack size at linebacker but are excellent in pursuit. Devin Bass and Ian Wells are proven cornerbacks, although safety is a concern.

BOTTOM LINE: The great unknown at quarterback makes it nearly impossible to predict how the Bobcats will fare, but Solich has done more with less in the past.

4 BUFFALO BULLS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Albany	
S.12	@PENN STATE	
S.19	@FLORIDA ATLANTIC	
S.26	Nevada	
O.3	Bowling Green	35-36
O.17	@CENTRAL MICHIGAN	14-20
O.24	Ohio	14-37
O.29	@MIAMI (OH)	35-27
N.5	@KENT STATE	
N.11	Northern Illinois	
N.21	@AKRON	55-24
N.27	Massachusetts	41-21

COACH

Lance Leipold
First year
Career record: 109-6
Offensive coordinator: Andy Kotelnicki (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Brian Borland (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 5-6
Stadium: UB Stadium (29,013)
Tickets: 877-UB-THERE
Site: Buffalo
Website: ubbulls.com
Twitter: @UBFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Joe Licata (6-2, 226, Sr.)
RB Anthone Taylor (5-10, 207, Sr.)
FB Kendall Patterson (6-0, 238, Sr.)
LT Robert Blodgett (6-5, 311, Sr.)
LG Brandon Manosalvas (6-4, 308, So.)
C James O'Hagan (6-2, 293, Fr.)
RG Dillon Guy (6-4, 335, Sr.)
RT John Kling (6-7, 324, Sr.)
WR Ron Willoughby (6-4, 199, Sr.)
WR Marcus McGill (6-1, 222, Sr.)
WR Jacob Martinez (6-2, 187, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Demone Harris (6-4, 270, So.)
NG Max Perisse (6-4, 271, Jr.)
DT Brandon Crawford (6-2, 275, Jr.)
DE Solomon Jackson (6-1, 240, So.)
OLB Jarrett Franklin (6-0, 217, Jr.)
MLB Greg Lis (6-0, 222, So.)
OLB Okezie Alozie (6-0, 217, Sr.)
CB Marqus Baker (5-10, 181, Sr.)
CB Boise Ross (6-0, 182, Jr.)
SS Brandon Berry (6-0, 204, Jr.)
FS Andrews Dadeboe (6-1, 196, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K Adam Mitcheson (6-1, 187, Fr.)
P Tyler Grassman (6-1, 195, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

The shocking midseason firing of coach Jeff Quinn in 2014 was followed by the equally surprising hiring of Lance Leipold. While Leipold lacks the FBS pedigree of most, no one can argue with his success at Division 3 Wisconsin-Whitewater that includes a 109-6 record and six national championships.

He inherits a program that returns a four-year starter at quarterback in Joe Licata, who fired 29 touchdown passes in 11 games and already holds the school record for TD strikes with 60. Licata will hand off to All-MAC tailback Anthone Taylor, who rushed for 1,403 yards last season, and target wideout Ron Willoughby, whose nine touchdown receptions were third in the conference. The offensive line returns only two starters in tackles Robert Blodgett and John Kling.

The defense shifts from a 3-3-5 to a traditional 4-3 under coordinator Brian Borland, but the front seven was hit hard by graduation. Tackle Brandon Crawford played well as a sophomore and Max Perisse was a late-season surprise.

The Bulls' biggest concern heading into training camp is establishing depth along the defensive line and improving against the run, where they ranked seventh in the MAC a year ago. Linebacker Jarrett Franklin is the top returning tackler, while Okezie Alozie, who has played some safety in the past, has found a home at linebacker. Starters Marqus Baker and Boise Ross, a converted wideout, return at cornerback, while Andrews Dadeboe and Brandon Berry are the new starters at safety.

BOTTOM LINE: If the defense can stop being so benevolent, there's no reason why the Bulls can't reach bowl eligibility.

5 UMASS MINUTEMEN

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.12	@COLORADO	38-41
S.19	Temple (at Foxboro, MA)	
S.26	@NOTRE DAME	
O.3	Florida International	
O.10	@BOWLING GREEN	42-47
O.17	Kent State	40-17
O.24	Toledo (at Foxboro, MA)	35-42
O.31	@BALL STATE	24-10
N.7	Akron	6-30
N.14	@EASTERN MICHIGAN	36-14
N.21	Miami (OH)	41-42
N.27	@BUFFALO	21-41

COACH

Mark Whipple
Eighth year (52-35)
Career record: 123-69
Offensive coordinator: Mark Whipple (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Tom Masella (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: McGuirk Alumni Stadium (17,000) and Gillette Stadium (68,756)
Tickets: 866-UMASS-TIX
Site: Amherst, Mass.
Website: umassathletics.com
Twitter: @UMassFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Blake Frohnapfel (6-6, 229, Sr.)
RB Shadrach Abrokwah (5-9, 202, So.)
LT Tyrell Smith (6-5, 315, So.)
LG Fabian Hoeller (6-3, 295, So.)
C Matt Sparks (6-4, 280, Jr.)
RG Michael Boland (6-7, 315, So.)
RT Elijah Wilkinson (6-4, 315, So.)
TE Rodney Mills (6-1, 215, Jr.)
WR Jalen Williams (6-3, 191, Jr.)
WR Shakur Nesmith (6-4, 200, Fr.)
WR Tajae Sharpe (6-4, 200, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Peter Angeh (6-2, 258, So.)
NT Robert Kitching III (6-1, 307, Jr.)
DT Sha-Ki Holines (6-3, 260, Fr.)
OLB Kassan Messiah (6-4, 237, Jr.)
ILB Vondell Langston (6-0, 220, So.)
ILB Jovan Santos-Knox (6-2, 240, Jr.)
OLB Trey Seals (6-4, 237, Jr.)
CB Randall Jette (5-11, 180, Jr.)
CB Trey Dudley-Giles (5-11, 182, Jr.)
FS Joe Colton (5-10, 195, Jr.)
SS Khary Bailey-Smith (6-2, 194, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Blake Lucas (5-8, 166, Jr.)
P Logan Laurent (6-4, 210, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

Massachusetts didn't enter the win column often in 2014 but the Minutemen sure looked like they were having fun trying. UMass averaged 37.5 points in losses to Colorado, Vanderbilt, Bowling Green, Miami (Ohio) and Toledo and, as the Minutemen prepare for their final season in the MAC, bowl eligibility is a reasonable goal.

There's plenty to like on offense, starting with quarterback Blake Frohnapfel, a first-team All-MAC selection who threw for 3,345 yards, 23 touchdowns and 10 interceptions last year. Frohnapfel has several options at his disposal led by jazzy wideout Tajae Sharpe (85 receptions for 1,281 yards). The run game ranked near the bottom of the league and needs more production from Shadrach Abrokwah and Lorenzo Woodley. There's good depth along the offensive line with Matt Sparks, Tyrell Smith, Fabian Hoeller and Elijah Wilkinson having combined for 74 career starts.

UMass has stars on defense in linebacker Jovan Santos-Knox and cornerback Randall Jette, but the unit must play with more consistency overall. The Minutemen finished in the league's bottom half in total defense, scoring defense and pass defense. Generating more pressure up front would help. Santos-Knox can often be found in the backfield (98 tackles) but Kassan Messiah and Trey Seals need to be just as active at linebacker. Jette is part of an experienced secondary that features safeties Joe Colton and Khary Bailey-Smith and corner Trey Dudley-Giles.

BOTTOM LINE: The offense is entertaining but the lack of depth on defense means the Minutemen will have to win their fair share of shootouts to be successful.

6 KENT STATE
GOLDEN FLASHES

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	@ILLINOIS	
S.12	Delaware State	
S.19	@MINNESOTA	
S.26	Marshall	
O.3	Miami (OH)	3-10
O.10	@TOLEDO	20-30
O.17	@MASSACHUSETTS	17-40
O.24	Bowling Green	20-30
N.5	Buffalo	
N.10	@OHIO	14-17
N.18	Central Michigan	
N.27	@AKRON	27-24

COACH
Paul Haynes
Third year (6-17)
Career record: 6-17

Offensive coordinator:
Don Treadwell (first year)
Defensive coordinator:
Brian George (third year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 2-9
Stadium: Dix Stadium (25,319)
Tickets: 330-672-2244
Site: Kent, Ohio
Website: kentstatesports.com
Twitter: @KentStFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Colin Reardon (6-1, 202, Jr.)
RB Nick Holley (5-10, 191, Jr.)
LT Reno Reda (6-6, 292, Jr.)
LG Wayne Scott (6-3, 320, Jr.)
C Alex Nielsen (6-4, 294, Jr.)
RG Anthony Pruitt (6-2, 300, Sr.)
RT Brock Macaulay (6-5, 290, So.)
TE Brice Fackler (6-3, 234, Jr.)
WR Josh Boyle (5-9, 173, Sr.)
WR Kris White (6-1, 210, So.)
WR Ernest Calhoun (5-6, 151, Jr.)

DEFENSE
DE Terence Waugh (6-1, 250, Jr.)
NG Jon Cunningham (6-0, 295, So.)
DT Nate Terhune (6-4, 270, Sr.)
OLB Marques Moore (6-2, 200, So.)
ILB Elcee Refuge (5-9, 230, Jr.)
ILB Matt Dellinger (6-1, 225, Sr.)
OLB DeVante' Strickland (6-1, 237, Sr.)
CB Najee Murray (5-9, 180, Jr.)
CB Demetrius Monday (5-10, 197, So.)
FS Jordan Italiano (5-10, 207, Sr.)
SS Nate Holley (5-11, 200, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS
K Anthony Melchiori (5-11, 186, Sr.)
P Anthony Melchiori (5-11, 186, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Kent State played only four seniors on both sides of the ball last season, leaving redshirt freshmen and sophomores to absorb the growing pains through a discouraging 2-9 campaign.

Now in his third season, coach Paul Haynes realizes the Golden Flashes need to make strides immediately.

Do-everything slot receiver Ernest Calhoun, who will also see time at tailback, has to have a big year, but Haynes seeks another offensive playmaker.

It could be quarterback Colin Reardon, but he has to cut down on his turnovers, or tailback Nick Holley, who averaged 5.2 yards a carry last year.

The offensive line is deep and experienced with left tackle Reno Reda, left guard Wayne Scott and center Alex Nielsen as the anchors. Right guard Anthony Pruitt, who sat out last season, is the lone senior.

Defensive tackle Nate Terhune (6 tackles for a loss in 2014) is a four-year starter, but the strength of the defense lies in the secondary, which ranked first in the league in pass defense.

Strong safety Nate Holley was a first-team All-MAC pick a year ago, and cornerbacks Najee Murray and Demetrius Monday are also back.

At linebacker, DeVante' Strickland returns after missing all of last season with a knee injury and he'll be part of a solid unit that includes Matt Dellinger, Elcee Refuge, Marques Moore and West Virginia transfer Davonte James.

BOTTOM LINE: If the offense catches up to what could be a punishing defense, Kent State may surprise.

7 MIAMI (OHIO)
REDHAWKS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Presbyterian	
S.12	@WISCONSIN	
S.19	Cincinnati	24-31
S.26	@WESTERN KENTUCKY	
O.3	@KENT STATE	10-3
O.10	@OHIO	21-24
O.17	Northern Illinois	41-51
O.24	@WESTERN MICHIGAN	10-41
O.29	Buffalo	27-35
N.7	Eastern Michigan	
N.14	Akron	19-29
N.21	@MASSACHUSETTS	42-41

COACH
Chuck Martin
Second year (2-10)
Career record: 76-17

Offensive coordinators:
George Barnett (second year)
Eric Koehler (second year)
Defensive coordinator:
Matt Pawlowski (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 2-10
Stadium: Yager Stadium (24,286)
Tickets: 513-529-HAWK
Site: Oxford, Ohio
Website: muredhawks.com
Twitter: @MiamiOHFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Drew Kummer (6-3, 207, Sr.)
RB Spencer McInnis (5-9, 196, Jr.)
LT Zach Hovey (6-5, 247, So.)
LG Trevan Brown (6-4, 307, Sr.)
C Brandyn Cook (6-3, 303, Sr.)
RG Terry Davis (6-4, 290, Jr.)
RT Collin Buchanan (6-5, 313, Jr.)
TE Ryan Smith (6-4, 258, So.)
WR Jared Murphy (5-10, 180, Jr.)
WR Rokeem Williams (6-1, 204, Jr.)
WR Sam Martin (6-3, 189, So.)

DEFENSE
DE Bryson Albright (6-5, 243, Sr.)
DT Mitchell Winters (6-5, 285, Sr.)
NT Jimmy Rousher (6-2, 288, Jr.)
DE JT Jones (6-3, 245, Jr.)
OLB Joe Donlan (6-0, 228, Sr.)
MLB Kent Kern (6-1, 238, Sr.)
OLB Tyler Tucker (6-2, 227, Sr.)
CB Marshall Taylor (6-3, 199, Jr.)
CB Bert Birdsall (5-11, 161, So.)
S Heath Harding (5-10, 182, Jr.)
S Tony Reid (6-1, 194, So.)

SPECIALISTS
K Kaleb Patterson (5-10, 170, Sr.)
P Christian Koch (6-0, 180, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Coach Chuck Martin finished 2-10 in his maiden season at Miami, the most losses the former Notre Dame assistant has experienced in the last decade.

The bright side is the RedHawks were often competitive heading into the final quarter–every ray of sunshine helps when you've lost 38 games over the last four seasons–but they still have a long way to go before challenging the league's elite.

Only four starters return on offense and Martin must replace All-MAC quarterback Andrew Hendrix. Drew Kummer will get first crack but redshirt freshman Gus Ragland and true freshman Billy Bahl are expected to compete. The receiving corps is talented, starting with Jared Murphy, a pure route-runner who finished with 60 receptions last season. Rokeem Williams averaged 19.5 yards a catch. Sam Martin is another deep threat, while Fred McRae came on at the end of the season as a receiver and returner.

The defense loses cornerback Quinten Rollins, the MAC Defensive Player of the Year, but returns seven starters–most notably middle linebacker Kent Kern, an All-MAC performer, and defensive end Bryson Albright, a strong pass rusher who needs to build strength. Two-year starter Heath Harding is effective at either corner or safety, while Martin looks for improvement from Marshall Taylor at cornerback.

BOTTOM LINE: Martin is happy with the direction of the program but the reality is the RedHawks are not that far removed from losing 22 consecutive games and have won two of the last 28. They are at least a year away from building up the talent pool to compete in the MAC.

WESTERN MICHIGAN

BRONCOS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1

Zach Terrell

Apparently 34-year-old P.J. Fleck didn't have time for a lengthy rebuilding job at Western Michigan. Everything about his generation is rush, rush, rush ... including winning.

"It's really about what kind of expectations you set within the program on young people," Fleck says. "If you give them a ceiling, they'll hit the ceiling. If you take the ceiling away, they'll do things that shock you."

Like rejuvenating a program that finished 1-11 in 2013 into a bowl-bound 8-5 machine in '14 that is the team to beat in the MAC–all while using players so young Fleck might consider instituting daily nap time. The star is sophomore tailback Jarvion Franklin, who became the first player in league history to win both Rookie of the Year and Offensive Player of the Year in the same season after producing 1,714 all-purpose yards and 25 touchdowns. Also returning is quarterback Zach Terrell, who threw for 3,443 yards, 26 touchdowns and 10 interceptions in 2014.

The top five wide receivers are back, including Corey Davis and Daniel Braverman, and the competition for the third wideout between Darius Phillips and Kendrick Roberts should be intense. The versatile Phillips saw extended time in the spring at cornerback, where he could replace the departed Donald Celiscar. Whatever happens, Phillips will likely play both ways. The offensive line features a pair of All-MAC performers in left tackle Willie Beavers and left guard James Kristof.

The Broncos are deep and talented at linebacker and Fleck has plenty of options. Grant DePalma and Robert Spillane will start but Austin Lewis, JaKevin Jackson, Jason Sylva and Eddie Rolle will push for playing time. The defensive line appears more settled with Jarrell McKinney and Nathan Braster at the ends while Cleveland Smith and David Curle work inside.

In the secondary, Ronald Zamort is a lock at one corner, as is Rontavious Atkins at strong safety. Asantay Brown should get the nod at free safety.

BOTTOM LINE

The program has all the elements for a MAC title run, although the last three regular-season games–at home against Bowling Green and on the road against Northern Illinois and Toledo–will test their mettle.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Jarvion Franklin, RB

History fell at the feet of Franklin in 2014. The 6-0, 220-pound running back from Tinley Park, Ill., stepped on campus as a 19-year-old and, by year's end, had set the MAC single-season freshman rushing record with 1,525 yards, scored 24 touchdowns and accomplished what no other Bronco, or MAC player, ever had: win MAC Freshman of the Year and Offensive Player of the Year in the same season.

MAC – West

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	Michigan State	
S.12	@GEORGIA SOUTHERN	
S.19	Murray State	45-14
S.26	@OHIO STATE	
O.10	Central Michigan	32-20
O.17	@OHIO	42-21
O.24	Miami (OH)	42-10
O.29	@EASTERN MICHIGAN	51-7
N.5	Ball State	42-38
N.11	Bowling Green	26-14
N.18	@NORTHERN ILLINOIS	21-31
N.27	@TOLEDO	19-20

COACH

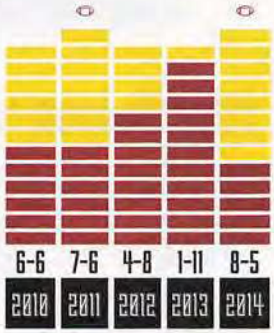
P.J. Fleck
Third year (9-16)
Career record: 9-16

Offensive coordinator: Kirk Ciarrocca (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Ed Pinkham (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Air Force in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, 38-24)
Stadium: Waldo Stadium (30,200)
Tickets: 888-4-WMU-TIX
Site: Kalamazoo, Mich.
Website: wmubroncos.com
Twitter: @WMU_Football

5-YEAR RECORD 26-36



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Zach Terrell (6-1, 204, Jr.)
RB Jarvion Franklin (6-0, 220, So.)
FB Donnie Ernsberger (6-2, 246, So.)
LT Willie Beavers (6-5, 309, Sr.)
LG James Kristof (6-3, 320, Sr.)
C Jackson Day (6-3, 292, Jr.)
RG Curtis Doyle (6-5, 304, Fr.)
RT Taylor Moton (6-5, 316, Jr.)
TE Eric Boyden (6-4, 251, Sr.)
WR Corey Davis (6-3, 205, Jr.)
WR Daniel Braverman (5-10, 177, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Jarrell McKinney (6-4, 241, Sr.)
DT Cleveland Smith (6-1, 262, Sr.)
DT David Curle (6-2, 290, Jr.)
DE Nathan Braster (6-5, 258, So.)
OLB Robert Spillane (6-2, 235, So.)
MLB Grant DePalma (5-9, 218, Sr.)
OLB Caleb Bailey (6-0, 236, So.)
CB Ronald Zamort (5-10, 174, Sr.)
CB Logan Oce (5-11, 173, So.)
FS Asantay Brown (6-0, 198, So.)
SS Rontavious Atkins (6-0, 207, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Andrew Haldeman (5-10, 180, Sr.)
P J. Schroeder (6-0, 205, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1 • **Justin Tranquill,** S ★★★
2 • **LeVante Bellamy,** WR ★★★
3 • **Wesley French,** OT ★★★

Under coach P.J. Fleck, Western Michigan is becoming a regular atop the MAC recruiting rankings. The No. 1 MAC class for 2015 is led by Justin Tranquill, the younger brother of Notre Dame safety Drue Tranquill. Long and athletic defensive end Donte Horton is the younger brother of Kentucky running back Mikel Horton and has immense upside. Kadeem Goulbourne, a 6-4, 200-pound wideout, has as much upside as anybody and had offers from the SEC and beyond.

TERRELL: OTTO KITSINGER / AP

2 TOLEDO ROCKETS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	Stony Brook	
S.12	@ARKANSAS	
S.19	Iowa State	30-37
S.26	Arkansas State	63-44
O.3	@BALL STATE	34-23
O.10	Kent State	30-20
O.17	Eastern Michigan	52-16
O.24	@MASSACHUSETTS	42-35
N.3	Northern Illinois	24-27
N.10	@CENTRAL MICHIGAN	42-28
N.17	@BOWLING GREEN	27-20
N.27	Western Michigan	20-19

COACH

Matt Campbell
Fourth year (26-13)
Career record: 26-13

Offensive coordinator: Jason Candle (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator: Jon Heacock (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 9-4
(Beat Arkansas State in the GoDaddy Bowl, 63-44)
Stadium: Glass Bowl (26,248)
Tickets: 419-530-GOLD
Site: Toledo, Ohio
Website: utrockets.com
Twitter: @ToledoFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Phillip Ely (6-1, 202, Sr.)
RB Kareem Hunt (5-11, 215, Jr.)
LT Storm Norton (6-8, 310, Jr.)
LG Bill Weber (6-4, 325, So.)
C Elijah Nkansah (6-6, 295, So.)
RG Paul Perschon (6-6, 310, Jr.)
RT Mike Ebert (6-6, 285, Jr.)
TE Alex Zmolik (6-5, 245, Sr.)
WR Corey Jones (5-8, 165, Jr.)
WR Alonzo Russell (6-4, 205, Sr.)
WR Cody Thompson (6-1, 187, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Allen Covington (6-2, 275, Sr.)
DT Orion Jones (6-2, 285, Sr.)
DT Treyvon Hester (6-4, 300, Jr.)
DE Trent Voss (6-3, 220, Sr.)
OLB Zach Quinn (6-3, 225, So.)
MLB Chase Murdock (6-0, 225, Sr.)
OLB Jaylen Coleman (6-0, 235, Jr.)
CB Chris Dukes (5-9, 185, Sr.)
CB Jordan Martin (6-2, 205, Jr.)
FS DeJuan Rogers (6-1, 185, Jr.)
SS Chaz Whittaker (6-2, 200, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Samuel Vucelich (5-11, 172, So.)
P Nick Ellis (5-11, 170, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

There are plenty of skilled veteran players on offense for the Rockets, starting with explosive wideouts Alonzo Russell, Corey Jones and Cody Thompson, while Alex Zmolik is one of the league's best at tight end.

But who plays quarterback is anyone's guess. There are six signal-callers listed on the two-deep depth chart, but it appears to be a three-man race between Phillip Ely (who is coming off an ACL injury), Logan Woodside and Michael Julian. Going into the fall, Ely gets the slight nod based on experience.

There are seven tailbacks on the two-deep but none better than All-MAC selection Kareem Hunt, who has rushed for more than 100 yards in 15 of 22 games as a collegian. The offensive line has to be retooled, but massive left tackle Storm Norton is a good building block.

The starting point on defense is the front seven, where tackles Orion Jones and Treyvon Hester helped the Rockets lead the league in rush defense last year. Meanwhile, end Trent Voss led all MAC linemen in tackles with 77, and finished second in the league with 15 tackles for loss.

Toledo has to replace some key linebackers but Chase Murdock is back in the middle after missing the entire 2014 campaign with an injury.

The Rockets lost starting cornerbacks Cheatham Norrils and Cameron Cole before last season, but Chris Dukes and Jordan Martin sit atop the depth chart for now and UAB transfer Rolan Milligan, the Blazers' second-leading tackler a year ago, has been added to the talent pool at safety.

BOTTOM LINE If the issues are sorted out at quarterback, the Rockets can enjoy another special season.

3 NORTHERN ILLINOIS HUSKIES

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	UNLV	48-34
S.12	Murray State	
S.19	@OHIO STATE	
S.26	@BOSTON COLLEGE	
O.3	@CENTRAL MICHIGAN	17-34
O.10	Ball State	35-21
O.17	@MIAMI (OH)	51-41
O.24	Eastern Michigan	28-17
N.3	@TOLEDO	27-24
N.11	@BUFFALO	
N.18	Western Michigan	31-21
N.24	Ohio	21-14

COACH

Rod Carey
Third year (23-6)
Career record: 23-6

Offensive coordinator: Bob Cole (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Jay Niemann (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 11-3
(Lost to Marshall in the Boca Raton Bowl, 52-23)
Stadium: Huskie Stadium (23,595)
Tickets: 815-753-PACK
Site: DeKalb, Ill.
Website: niuhuskies.com
Twitter: @NIU_Football

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Drew Hare (6-1, 210, Jr.)
RB Joel Bouagnon (6-2, 224, Jr.)
FB Shane Wimann (6-4, 249, So.)
LT Levon Myers (6-5, 299, Jr.)
LG Aidan Conlon (6-3, 301, Sr.)
C Andrew Ness (6-3, 298, Sr.)
RG Josh Ruka (6-5, 305, Jr.)
RT Lincoln Howard (6-5, 301, Jr.)
TE Desroy Maxwell (6-2, 259, Sr.)
WR Juwan Brescacin (6-4, 228, Sr.)
WR Tommylee Lewis (5-7, 159, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Cameron Clinton-Earl (6-1, 253, Sr.)
DT William Lee (6-2, 303, So.)
NG Corey Thomas (6-2, 307, Jr.)
DE Perez Ford (6-0, 223, Sr.)
OLB Rasheen Lemon (6-0, 220, Sr.)
MLB Boomer Mays (6-0, 246, Sr.)
OLB Sean Folliard (6-2, 229, Jr.)
CB Anthony Brooks (5-11, 191, Jr.)
CB Paris Logan (5-9, 189, Sr.)
FS Brandon Mayes (5-11, 188, So.)
SS Marlon Moore (5-9, 195, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Christian Hagan (6-0, 180, So.)
P Peter Deppe (6-1, 198, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

The Huskies have won three Mid-American Conference championships in four seasons, including an 11-3 mark a year ago, but coach Rod Carey wasn't exactly pleased with the end result, especially after losing to Marshall in the Boca Raton Bowl.

"We've got a bad taste in our mouth and we've had to sit on another loss for the entire offseason," Carey says.

It's a good thing Northern Illinois will be strong defensively, with eight starters back, but Carey wants the unit to play with more consistency: Arkansas and Marshall rang up at least 50 points on the defense last season. Carey would also like strong safety Marlon Moore to play more like the graduated Dechane Durante did a year ago. Senior end Perez Ford needs to elevate his game as well, while at linebacker, seniors Rasheen Lemon and Boomer Mays will be flanked by junior Sean Folliard.

The Huskies will be dynamic at the skill positions once again with the return of wide receiver/kick returner Tommylee Lewis, who missed most of last season with an injury. He has accounted for 3,617 all-purpose yards in 39 career games and his return should give a boost to an already-potent offense. The Huskies have made a living with dual-threat quarterbacks and Drew Hare, who threw for 2,322 yards and ran for another 927 last year, certainly fits that mold. Center Andrew Ness is back and the Huskies have a tradition of putting together strong, physical offensive lines.

BOTTOM LINE Carey believes his team can be more explosive offensively than a year ago. Getting to a fifth consecutive bowl will depend on how quickly the offensive line comes together.

4 BALL STATE CARDINALS

Contending for the league championship seemed to be the next logical step for Ball State in 2014, but key injuries resulted in a 1-5 start that doomed the season. The Cardinals, nevertheless, rebounded nicely, winning four of their last six to finish 5-7. Tailback Jahwan Edwards, the program's career rushing leader, has to be replaced, but everyone else of note returns on offense, including a pair of all-league selections at wide receiver in Jordan Williams and KeVonn Mabon. The offensive line, which yielded a league-low 12 sacks last season, has five fifth-year seniors, including center Jacob Richard and right guard Jalen Schlachter, who have a combined 53 starts. Quarterback is up for grabs between Ozzie Mann and Jack Milas, but redshirt freshman David Morrison and true freshman Riley Neal cannot be overlooked.

Seven starters return on defense but Ball State coach Pete Lembo would like to see more playmakers to complement All-MAC tackle Darnell Smith. One candidate is linebacker Aaron Taylor, a former safety who recorded 4.5 tackles for loss last season. Another is University of Cincinnati transfer Joshua Posley, who has creeped up the depth chart at defensive end. End Osa Igbinosun played well down the stretch last season and another end, junior Anthony Winbush, added some much-needed bulk in the offseason.

BOTTOM LINE: The Cards should carry on that late-season momentum from 2014.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	VMI
S.12	@TEXAS A&M
S.19	@EASTERN MICHIGAN
S.26	@NORTHWESTERN
O.3	Toledo
O.10	@NORTHERN ILLINOIS
O.17	Georgia State
O.24	Central Michigan
O.31	Massachusetts
N.5	@WESTERN MICHIGAN
N.17	@OHIO
N.24	Bowling Green

QUICK HITS 2014 RECORD: 5-7

Coach: Pete Lembo (Fifth year, 30-20)
Career record: 109-56
Offensive coordinator: Joey Lynch (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Kevin Kelly (second year)

Stadium: Scheumann Stadium (22,500)
Tickets: 765-285-1474
Site: Muncie, Ind.
Website: ballstatesports.com
Twitter: @BallStateFB

5 CENTRAL MICHIGAN CHIPPEWAS

No school in the conference had a more volatile offseason than Central Michigan, which lost coach Dan Enos after he didn't receive the contract extension he desired and left to become Arkansas' offensive coordinator two weeks before Signing Day.

Enter longtime NFL assistant John Bonamego, a CMU graduate who views this as a long-term job because a winning foundation was established long ago.

Bonamego has a third-year starter at quarterback in Cooper Rush and an All-MAC center in Nick Beamish but needs to develop another playmaker now that multitalented wide receiver Titus Davis has departed.

Rush

The Chippewas will run a four-man front on defense, which will once again utilize the talents of ends Blake Serpa and Joe Ostman. Bonamego likes the potential of middle linebacker Jeff Perry as well as safeties Kavon Frazier and Tony Annese, who came on strong in the spring.

Perhaps Bonamego's biggest offseason win was retaining the bulk of Enos' recruiting class. Of the 18 commitments, the Chippewas lost only two.

BOTTOM LINE: Central Michigan fans should be happy about the hiring of a reputable coach who doesn't view the job as a springboard for a bigger program. But there are bound to be some peaks and valleys in the first season.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	Oklahoma State
S.12	Monmouth
S.19	@SYRACUSE
S.26	@MICHIGAN STATE
O.3	Northern Illinois
O.10	@WESTERN MICHIGAN
O.17	Buffalo
O.24	@BALL STATE
O.31	@AKRON
N.10	Toledo
N.18	@KENT STATE
N.27	Eastern Michigan

QUICK HITS 2014 RECORD: 7-6

Coach: John Bonamego (First year)
Offensive coordinator: Morris Watts (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Greg Colby (first year)

(Lost to Western Kentucky in the Bahamas Bowl, 49-46)
Stadium: Kelly/Shorts Stadium (30,255)
Tickets: 888-347-3872
Site: Mount Pleasant, Mich.
Website: cmuchippewas.com
Twitter: @CMU_Football

6 EASTERN MICHIGAN EAGLES

Second-year coach Chris Creighton admits Saturday afternoons last fall were frustrating: Eastern Michigan didn't play at a level to be consistently successful and its record showed.

The Eagles were last in the MAC in turnover margin (minus-18), yielded an average of nearly 500 yards a game defensively and averaged just 15.2 points on offense.

Yet, with seven returning starters, the defense should be much improved, led by tackle Pat O'Connor, a first-team All-MAC selection who was second in the conference in sacks (7.5) and linebacker Great Ibe, a second-team all-league pick who registered a team-best 133 tackles.

The Eagles had three different quarterbacks start the first four games last season, but Reginald Bell, who paced the team in passing and rushing, is the unquestioned No. 1 this time around.

Bell

Bell will be asked to carry a unit with questions along the offensive line, which graduated four seniors, and wide receiver, where two starters must be replaced.

BOTTOM LINE: It is imperative for the Eagles to continue to change the culture in Creighton's second season. The program has won just six games in three seasons since finishing .500 in 2011. Building consistency on both sides of the ball will be critical.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.5	Old Dominion
S.12	@WYOMING
S.19	Ball State
S.26	Army
O.3	@LSU
O.10	Akron
O.17	@TOLEDO
O.24	@NORTHERN ILLINOIS
O.29	Western Michigan
N.7	@MIAMI (OH)
N.14	Massachusetts
N.27	@CENTRAL MICHIGAN

QUICK HITS 2014 RECORD: 2-10

Coach: Chris Creighton (Second year, 2-10)
Career record: 141-56
Offensive coordinator: Kalen DeBoer (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Brad McCaslin (second year)

Stadium: Rynearson Stadium (30,200)
Tickets: 734-487-2282
Site: Ypsilanti, Mich.
Website: emueagles.com
Twitter: @EMUFB

RUSH: CHARLIE REDEL / AP; BELL: JOHN RAOUX / AP

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MWC feeling good about decision to woo Broncos

BY STEVE CARP | *Las Vegas Review-Journal*

PROJECTED FINISH

Mountain Division

1. **Boise State**
   Bowl Projection: Chick-Fil-A Peach Bowl
2. **Utah State**
   Bowl Projection: Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
3. **Colorado State**
   Bowl Projection: New Mexico Bowl
4. **Wyoming**
5. **Air Force**
6. **New Mexico**

West Division

1. **San Diego State**
   Bowl Projection: Las Vegas Bowl
2. **Fresno State**
   Bowl Projection: Poinsettia Bowl
3. **Nevada**
   Bowl Projection: New Orleans Bowl
4. **San Jose State**
5. **Hawaii**
6. **UNLV**

Chuckie Keeton, QB, Utah State

Remember all the hand-wringing around the Mountain West a couple of years ago when it enticed Boise State to stay and not depart for the Big East? Remember how some people were crying "Foul!" because the Broncos got a sweetheart television deal from the league and would get maximum exposure?

Nobody's complaining much now. Not after Boise State got the Mountain West back on the national scene with its appearance in the Fiesta Bowl, a game, incidentally, it won, 38-30, over 10th-ranked Arizona.

The Broncos did it with a new head coach—Bryan Harsin—an offense which averaged 39.7 points a game and a defense that did enough things right to produce a 12-2 overall record and a team that was ranked No. 16 in the country.

Not bad for a non-Power Five Conference school.

Boise State has some holes to fill, namely at quarterback, running back and on the defensive line. But Harsin has plenty of depth and at the very least, the Broncos will be favored to win the Mountain Division.

Colorado State, which finished second in the division, has a new coach as Jim McElwain left for Florida and former Georgia offensive coordinator Mike Bobo has taken over. Can the Rams find a suitable replacement for star quarterback Garrett Grayson, who threw for 4,006 yards and 32 touchdowns last year?

Utah State used three QBs last year. But if Chuckie Keeton can finally overcome the knee problems which short-circuited his last two years and stay on the field, the Aggies could challenge Boise State for the top spot. Wyoming has a strong running game and a good defense. Will that be enough to get the Cowboys back on track and into a bowl game?

In the West Division, San Diego State and Fresno State appear to be the top teams. Both teams went to bowl games, both teams lost those games, but the Aztecs—who are trying to find a replacement for quarterback Quinn Kaehler and came out of spring practice still undecided on who that someone will be—appear a little more talented and a little deeper throughout than the Bulldogs.

Boise State coach Bryan Harsin

San Jose State and Nevada figure to be competitive and while neither appears to have the depth to compete for the division title, they both boast strong recruiting classes and some of that talent should be able to make an immediate impact.

UNLV is rolling the dice with its new head coach following Bobby Hauck's resignation after a lackluster 2-11 season and replaced him with Tony Sanchez, who has been the guiding hand behind one of the nation's most successful high school programs, Bishop Gorman of Las Vegas. Sanchez's challenge is to change the culture of losing that has attached itself to the program for decades, save for brief periods of success.

The Mountain West had half of its teams play in the postseason. The pessimist might point to the fact that it's almost impossible not to play in a bowl game given the glut of opportunities. The optimist, however, would say that getting half your teams in and going 3-3 in those six games is an indication your conference is playing some decent football.

Who's right? Both sides have a pretty good case that can be made. But no one can argue that keeping Boise State, and even San Diego State around, was the right call by the Mountain West presidents. Especially when they check the bank account and see the $6 million that Fiesta Bowl appearance by the Broncos helped generate.

THOMPSON, HARSIN: OTTO KITSINGER / AP; KEETON: MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Back to the Big Time: Getting Boise State to play in a New Year's Eve bowl game was huge for the conference's credibility. It restored some of the Mountain West's lost luster and the $6 million it brought in didn't hurt either.**

2015 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Justin Hopkins, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RANK	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	POINTS
1	Boise State	22	0	1	21	171.02
2	San Jose State	33	0	1	22	168.85
3	San Diego State	25	0	2	12	163.43
4	Fresno State	18	0	1	13	153.45
5	Utah State	19	0	0	9	121.18
6	Wyoming	23	0	0	6	118.84
7	UNLV	21	0	0	7	116.73
8	Nevada	17	0	0	7	111.32
9	New Mexico	22	0	0	6	107.96
10	Colorado State	14	0	0	7	104.52
11	Hawaii	14	0	0	4	93.46
12	Air Force	28	0	0	1	89.65

ALL-MOUNTAIN WEST

OFFENSE

- QB **Chuckie Keeton,** Sr., Utah State
- RB **Jacobi Owens,** Jr., Air Force
- RB **Donnel Pumphrey,** Jr., San Diego State
- OL **Andrew Ruechel,** Sr., Air Force
- OL **Marcus Henry,** Sr., Boise State
- OL **Chase Roullier,** Jr., Wyoming
- OL **Rees Odhiambo,** Sr., Boise State
- OL **Ben Clarke,** Sr., Hawaii
- TE **Steven Walker,** Sr., Colorado State
- WR **Devonte Boyd,** So., UNLV
- WR **Rashard Higgins,** Jr., Colorado State

DEFENSE

- DL **Eddie Yarbrough,** Sr., Wyoming
- DL **Kamalei Correa,** Jr., Boise State
- DL **Joe Kawulok,** Sr., Colorado State
- DL **Ian Seau,** Sr., Nevada
- LB **Christian Tago,** Jr., San Jose State
- LB **Tanner Vallejo,** Jr., Boise State
- LB **Nick Vigil,** Jr., Utah State
- DB **Donte Deayon,** Sr., Boise State
- DB **Peni Vea,** Sr., UNLV
- DB **Damontae Kazee,** Jr., San Diego State
- DB **Darian Thompson,** Sr., Boise State

SPECIALISTS

- K **Donny Hageman,** Sr., San Diego State
- P **Alex Boy,** Jr., Nevada

PRESEASON MVP

He's a game-changer, someone who can get the ball back to the offense while short-circuiting an opposing team's drive. People don't throw in his direction and he still makes plays. Thompson had seven interceptions, ran one back for a touchdown and at 6-2, 210 pounds, can cover everywhere on the field and make the big hit.

Darian Thompson

OVERRATED

WYOMING

Craig Bohl had done great things at North Dakota State, with three straight FCS titles. That success didn't translate to Laramie, where the Cowboys went 4-8 after a 3-1 start—not what fans expected when he was hired.

UNDERRATED

NEVADA

He's an intense guy, but Brian Polian managed to get his message across. He shored up the defense, let Cody Fajardo do his thing at QB and got the Wolf Pack into a bowl game. Next step: a winning conference record.

2 QBs wanted: Virtually every team in the conference is going to have a new signal-caller this year. Only Utah State and San Jose State know what it has at the game's most critical position.

3 The Mountain 4x10: The Mountain Division had four teams (Boise State, Colorado State, Utah State and Air Force) win at least 10 games in 2014. That feat may be hard to duplicate.

RATING THE MTN. WEST

FASTEST RECEIVER
Shane Williams-Rhodes, Boise State
He's 5-6 and he can motor and stretch a defense.

BEST HANDS
Tyler Winston, WR, San Jose State
He only had 78 catches but he averaged 6.5 per game and had five touchdowns. If it's close, he'll catch it.

BEST PASSING QB
Joe Gray, San Jose State
Of the returning QBs in the league, he's got the best numbers. Completed 63.6 percent of his throws with just nine interceptions.

BEST RUNNING QB
Chuckie Keeton, Utah State
If his knees are healthy, and that's a big if, he's dangerous when he takes off with the ball.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
LaJuan Hunt, Utah State
At 5-8 there's not much to grab onto. Led the Aggies in rushing with 540 yards as a freshman.

BEST INSTINCTS
Darian Thompson, S, Boise State
He has a great feel for knowing where the ball is going to be and he can cover anywhere on the field.

BEST ATHLETE
JoJo Natson, WR, Utah State
He's only 5-7 but the guy is a big playmaker in a small package. Does a lot of things well.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED (OFF THE FIELD)
Weston Steelhammer, Air Force
Plans to be a pilot after football. One day, it may be his voice you hear saying, "This is your captain speaking ..."

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Donny Hageman, K, San Diego State
Made 80 percent of his field goal tries and all 37 PATs. He delivers when he's asked to come through.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Rashard Higgins, WR, Colorado State
He was a finalist for the Biletnikoff Award last year. He may win it this year and make himself more attractive in the draft—if he comes out after his junior season.

TOP IMPACT FROSH
Tae'on Mason, San Jose State
The four-star 6-0 receiver-cornerback from Pasadena, Calif. will likely play offense for the Spartans and be an inviting target for QB Joe Gray to throw to.

HARDEST HITTER
Nick Vigil, LB, Utah State
Takes after his big brother Zach. Forced five fumbles and had 123 total tackles as a sophomore.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Donnel Pumphrey, RB, San Diego State
For a guy who's just 5-9, he gets a lot done. Averaged 143.6 yards a game last year and scored 20 TDs.

BEST INTERVIEW
Tony Sanchez, UNLV
Has a lot to sell and he'll talk to anyone who will listen about his vision for reviving the Rebels.

BEST COACH AS STRATEGIST
Bryan Harsin, Boise State
Big game, early-season game, doesn't matter. Has his team ready to go and ready to adjust if need be.

BEST COACH AS RECRUITER
Ron Caragher, San Jose State
The Spartans ranked second to Boise State in overall recruiting class with a lot less to sell than the Broncos have.

HOTTEST SEAT
Bob Davie, New Mexico
Yeah, 4-8 is better than 3-9 but Lobos fans were hoping for a quicker turnaround. Time to take the great leap forward in Year Four.

BEST VENUE
Mackay Stadium, Nevada
Having a nice on-campus stadium that is also getting a facelift is always a plus. When the Wolf Pack are winning, this is a loud and tough place to play.

BOISE STATE

BRONCOS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 21

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1

Darian Thompson

It's safe to say the transition went pretty seamless in Boise. Chris Petersen moved on to the Pac-12 at Washington, Bryan Harsin took over and what happened? The Broncos won the Mountain Division, beat Fresno State in the conference championship game, and then capped off a 12-2 season by beating Arizona 38-30 in the Fiesta Bowl.

So what does Harsin do for an encore? There are a lot of pieces to replace. Quarterback Grant Hedrick is gone. So is running back Jay Ajayi as is kicker Dan Goodale. Retooling the BSU offense, which led the Mountain West in scoring and total offense, will be a priority.

The Broncos have an experienced offensive line so that will help expedite matters. Senior center Marcus Henry is an all-conference performer who has NFL scouts looking at him because of his strength, smarts, quickness and good feet. All five starters return and that will be invaluable in helping break in a new QB.

Who Henry and his mates on the O-line will protect should be interesting. Sophomore Ryan Finley has the most experience of anyone on the roster, but keep an eye on incoming freshman Brett Rypien.

Whoever gets the job will be getting the ball a lot to senior receiver Shane Williams-Rhodes and junior receiver Thomas Sperbeck. The duo combined for 119 catches and 10 touchdowns last year. Williams-Rhodes also was used on flanker reverses and had 179 yards on 15 rushing attempts in 2014 so don't be surprised to see him carry the ball from time to time when Boise State looks to reach into its bag of tricks. At tailback, Jeremy McNichols saw limited action as a freshman but still averaged 9.4 yards per carry.

Harsin may have to be patient with the offense, but he has a veteran defense returning and he will most likely be leaning on that group to carry the Broncos early in the season. There's talent and experience everywhere and BSU has one of the best secondaries in the country, led by seniors Darian Thompson (7 INTs last season) and Donte Deayon (6 INTs, 2 pick-sixes).

BOTTOM LINE

Yes, Boise State lost a lot on offense, but there's enough quality for the Broncos to win the conference championship and get back to a big bowl game.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Darian Thompson, S

The Broncos had the best offense in the Mountain West in 2014, but some of the best plays came from 6-2, 210-pound strong safety Thompson on the other side of the ball. He tied as the conference leader with seven interceptions and helped Boise State lead the conference with 22—and five were returned for touchdowns. Also, with 71 tackles (second on the team), Thompson gave the front seven dependable help from the backfield. The senior from Lancaster, Calif., will help sustain the conference's best playmaking defense.

Mountain West - Mountain

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	Washington	
S.12	@BYU	55-30
S.18	Idaho State	
S.25	@VIRGINIA	
O.3	Hawaii	
O.10	@COLORADO STATE	37-24
O.16	@UTAH STATE	50-19
O.24	Wyoming	63-14
O.31	@UNLV	
N.14	New Mexico	60-49
N.20	Air Force	14-28
N.27	@SAN JOSE STATE	

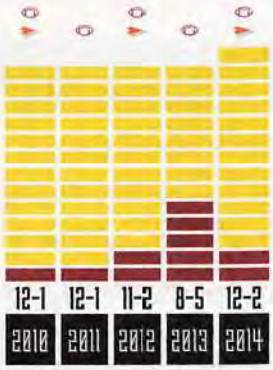
COACH

Bryan Harsin
Second year (12-2)
Career record: 20-7
Offensive coordinator: Eliah Drinkwitz (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Marcel Yates (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 12-2
(Beat Arizona in the Fiesta Bowl, 38-30)
Stadium: Albertsons Stadium (36,387)
Tickets: 208-426-4737
Site: Boise, Idaho
Website: broncosports.com
Twitter: @BroncoSportsFB

5-YEAR RECORD 55-11



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Ryan Finley (6-4, 199, So.)
RB Jeremy McNichols (5-9, 198, So.)
LT Rees Odhiambo (6-4, 303, Sr.)
LG Travis Averill (6-3, 302, Jr.)
C Marcus Henry (6-3, 296, Sr.)
RG Mario Yakoo (6-4, 327, Jr.)
RT Steven Baggett (6-3, 295, Jr.)
TE Jake Roh (6-3, 219, So.)
WR Thomas Sperbeck (6-0, 176, Jr.)
WR Shane Williams-Rhodes (5-6, 168, Sr.)
WR Chaz Anderson (5-10, 181, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Sam McCaskill (6-3, 255, Jr.)
DT Tyler Horn (6-5, 272, Sr.)
NT Armand Nance (6-0, 311, Sr.)
DE Kamalei Correa (6-3, 244, Jr.)
LB Tanner Vallejo (6-1, 226, Jr.)
LB Ben Weaver (6-0, 231, Jr.)
CB Donte Deayon (5-9, 150, Sr.)
CB Jonathan Moxey (5-10, 187, Jr.)
FS Chanceller James (6-2, 214, Jr.)
FS Kameron Miles (6-1, 208, So.)
SS Darian Thompson (6-2, 210, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Tyler Rausa (5-9, 195, Jr.)
P Sean Wale (6-2, 185, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

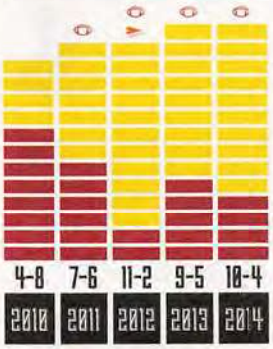
1 • **Brett Rypien,** QB ★★★★
2 • **Kameron Miles,** S ★★★
3 • **Drew Berger,** LB ★★★

The Broncos suffered a bit of a setback with the loss of offensive coordinator Mike Sanford Jr. to Notre Dame. However, Sanford was pivotal in bringing in elite four-star quarterback Brett Rypien as a parting gift. While Rypien is the headliner of the top-ranked recruiting class in the Mountain West, there is much to like about what coach Bryan Harsin and staff did. Loading up at defensive back was the top priority and the Broncos brought in at least seven players to help load up in the secondary.

THOMPSON, RICK SCUTERI / AP

UTAH STATE AGGIES

5-YEAR RECORD 41-25



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Chuckie Keeton (6-2, 210, Sr.)
RB LaJuan Hunt (5-8, 195, So.)
LT Austin Albrecht (6-5, 295, Jr.)
LG Tyshon Mosley (6-5, 290, So.)
C Austin Stephens (6-3, 305, Jr.)
RG Taani Fisilau (6-2, 295, Sr.)
RT Jake Simonich (6-5, 295, Jr.)
TE Wyatt Houston (6-5, 255, Jr.)
WR Kent Myers (6-0, 195, So.)
WR JoJo Natson (5-7, 160, Sr.)
WR Hunter Sharp (6-0, 200, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Jordan Nielsen (6-5, 270, Sr.)
NG Travis Seefeldt (6-2, 300, Sr.)
DE John Taylor (6-2, 270, Sr.)
LB Nick Vigil (6-2, 230, Jr.)
LB LT Filiaga (6-0, 240, Sr.)
LB Torrey Green (6-2, 230, Sr.)
LB Kyler Fackrell (6-5, 250, Sr.)
CB Jalen Davis (5-10, 170, So.)
CB Deshane Hines (5-10, 180, Sr.)
FS Devin Centers (5-9, 200, Jr.)
SS Marwin Evans (6-1, 210, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Jake Thompson (6-0, 215, Jr.)
P Aaron Dalton (6-4, 220, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1 • **Cameron Haney,** CB ★★★
2 • **Wesley Bailey,** C ★★★
3 • **Daniel Langi,** LB ★★★

The Aggies were fortunate to keep perhaps their most important piece intact during the offseason in rising young head coach Matt Wells, who has drawn interest from bigger programs. Wells and his staff got downright defensive with the 2015 class, as the top four commits are all on defense. A big portion of this class was filled by California and Utah prospects. But keep tabs on West Salem (Ore.) quarterback Cade Smith, the younger brother of record-setting former Wyoming QB Brett Smith.

Hunter Sharp

How many teams played three quarterbacks last year? And of those teams, how many produced a winning record and went to a bowl game? The Aggies lost starter Chuckie Keeton to a knee injury, the second time in two years that has happened. Then backup Darell Garretson got hurt and Kent Myers, a true freshman, played the final seven games. So if you're coach Matt Wells, you just pray that the football gods look after your QBs.

Keeton will have to prove his durability if he plans to be Utah State's starter. But Myers has shown he can get the job done, so if Keeton can't come all the way back, Utah State's still in good shape.

The Aggies have a good target to throw to in receiver Hunter Sharp, who had 66 receptions last year and scored seven touchdowns. JoJo Natson, one of the country's top punt returners, will also catch passes and get touches. Natson scored seven touchdowns in each of the last two seasons. And tight end Wyatt Houston averaged 9.4 yards per catch. Utah State's offensive line is experienced and is anchored by center Austin Stephens, guards Tyshon Mosley and Taani Fisilau and tackle Jake Simonich. They are excellent pass blockers and they should open up holes for LaJuan Hunt, who averaged 4.9 yards per carry as a freshman.

And while Wells is obviously excited about getting his quarterbacks back on the field, he's got to be thrilled about the seven returning starters for a defense that led the Mountain West in scoring (19.7 ppg) and rushing (130.7 ypg) defense. Linebackers Torrey Green, Nick Vigil and LT Filiaga return and they, along with corners Deshane Hines and Jalen Davis, will be the core group that should make USU tough to move the ball and score on.

They will have to be active as Utah State lost two defensive-line starters, but defensive end Jordan Nielsen and nose guard Travis Seefeldt will return to get pressure up front while also trying to effectively play the run. If a revamped defensive line means opposing quarterbacks getting more time, the secondary will be ready. Davis and Hines are both experienced corners and free safety Devin Centers gives Utah State a guy who can make plays at the point of attack and can also play the ball in the air.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Hunter Sharp, WR

In his first season with the Aggies, the juco transfer from Palmdale, Calif., quickly became the go-to option. Sharp played much bigger than his stature (6-0, 200 pounds), leading the team with 939 receiving yards, seven touchdowns, 66 receptions and 67.1 yards per game.

BOTTOM LINE

Utah State will play a very good nonleague schedule with road games at Utah and Washington in mid-September. Survive those and start fast with the MWC opener against Colorado State at home and the Aggies can exceed last year's accomplishments.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

2

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	Southern Utah	
S.11	@UTAH	
S.19	@WASHINGTON	
O.3	Colorado State	13-16
O.10	@FRESNO STATE	
O.16	Boise State	19-50
O.23	@SAN DIEGO STATE	
O.30	Wyoming	20-3
N.7	@NEW MEXICO	28-21
N.14	@AIR FORCE	34-16
N.21	Nevada	
N.28	BYU	35-20

COACH

Matt Wells
Third year (19-9)
Career record: 19-9

Offensive coordinators:
Luke Wells (third year)
Josh Heupel (first year)
Defensive coordinator:
Kevin Clune (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 10-4
(Beat UTEP in the New Mexico Bowl, 21-6)
Stadium: Romney Stadium (25,513)
Tickets: 888-USTATE-1
Site: Logan, Utah
Website: utahstateaggies.com
Twitter: @USUFootball

SHARP: ELI LUCERO/AP

3 COLORADO STATE RAMS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Savannah State	
S.12	Minnesota	
S.19	Colorado (at Denver, CO)	31-17
S.26	@UTSA	
O.3	@UTAH STATE	16-13
O.10	Boise State	24-37
O.17	Air Force	24-27
O.31	San Diego State	
N.7	@WYOMING	45-31
N.14	UNLV	
N.21	@NEW MEXICO	58-20
N.28	@FRESNO STATE	

COACH
Mike Bobo
First year
Offensive coordinator: Will Friend (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Tyson Summers (first year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 10-3
(Lost to Utah in the Las Vegas Bowl, 45-10)
Stadium: Hughes Stadium (32,500)
Tickets: 800-491-RAMS
Site: Fort Collins, Colo.
Website: csurams.com
Twitter: @CSUFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE
QB Nick Stevens (6-3, 190, So.)
RB Treyous Jarrells (5-7, 185, Sr.)
LT Trae Moxley (6-5, 300, So.)
LG Nick Callender (6-5, 327, Jr.)
C Kevin O'Brien (6-3, 295, Sr.)
RG Fred Zerblis (6-3, 295, Jr.)
RT Sam Carlson (6-4, 290, Sr.)
TE Steven Walker (6-2, 238, Sr.)
TE Kivon Cartwright (6-4, 245, Sr.)
WR Rashard Higgins (6-2, 188, Jr.)
WR Joe Hansley (5-10, 180, Sr.)

DEFENSE
DE Joe Kawulok (6-6, 260, Sr.)
DT Terry Jackson (6-2, 280, Sr.)
DT Justin Hansen (6-5, 305, Sr.)
DE SteveO Michel (6-1, 230, Sr.)
LB Cory James (6-1, 240, Sr.)
LB Deonte Clyburn (6-1, 225, Jr.)
LB Kevin Davis (6-3, 235, Jr.)
CB Tyree Simmons (5-11, 185, Jr.)
CB Preston Hodges (5-11, 200, Jr.)
FS Trent Matthews (6-3, 210, Sr.)
SS Kevin Pierre-Louis (6-1, 215, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS
K Berto Garcia (5-7, 191, So.)
P Hayden Hunt (5-11, 210, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

You knew the country was paying attention to the Rams' success last year when Florida was able to hire head coach Jim McElwain away from Fort Collins. So what did Colorado State do in response? It went to the Southeastern Conference and tabbed Georgia assistant Mike Bobo as McElwain's replacement.

Bobo, who was the Bulldogs' offensive coordinator, probably wishes he had shown up a year earlier to coach quarterback Garrett Grayson (4,006 passing yards, 32 touchdowns).

Redshirt sophomore Nick Stevens, junior Craig Leonard and redshirt freshman Coleman Key will battle it out for the starting QB job.

They'll target Rashard Higgins, perhaps the nation's top receiver, who averaged eight receptions a game and 18.2 yards per catch while scoring 17 touchdowns as a sophomore.

Also gone is running back Dee Hart (1,275 yards, 16 touchdowns), who elected to go pro after his junior year.

The Rams' defense, with eight returning starters, may have to lead the way. Three starters on the line (19 sacks) return as well as the entire secondary. But Cory James (22 career sacks) is the lone returning starter at linebacker.

The conference schedule is tough. Not only does Colorado State open on the road at Utah State, it will be the team's third straight game away from home. After facing the Aggies in Logan, Utah, CSU hosts Boise State, Air Force and San Diego State.

BOTTOM LINE Having to replace a star quarterback, the top running back and a successful coach in the same year might be too much to ask in terms of a division title. A winning record coupled with a minor bowl bid might be a more realistic goal.

4 WYOMING COWBOYS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	North Dakota	
S.12	Eastern Michigan	
S.19	@WASHINGTON STATE	
S.26	New Mexico	30-36
O.3	@APPALACHIAN STATE	
O.10	@AIR FORCE	17-13
O.17	Nevada	
O.24	@BOISE STATE	14-63
O.30	@UTAH STATE	3-20
N.7	Colorado State	31-45
N.14	@SAN DIEGO STATE	
N.28	UNLV	

COACH
Craig Bohl
Second year (4-8)
Career record: 108-40
Offensive coordinator: Brent Vigen (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Steve Stanard (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 4-8
Stadium: War Memorial Stadium (29,181)
Tickets: 877-WYO-FAN1
Site: Laramie, Wyo.
Website: gowyo.com
Twitter: @wyo_football

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE
QB Cameron Coffman (6-2, 186, Sr.)
RB Shaun Wick (5-10, 212, Sr.)
RB Brian Hill (6-1, 204, So.)
LT Ryan Cummings (6-5, 294, So.)
LG Chase Roullier (6-4, 293, Jr.)
C Rafe Kiely (6-3, 306, Sr.)
RG Charlie Renfree (6-3, 268, Fr.)
RT Taylor Knestis (6-5, 288, So.)
TE Jacob Hollister (6-4, 230, Jr.)
WR Tanner Gentry (6-2, 198, Jr.)
WR Jake Maulhardt (6-6, 215, Jr.)

DEFENSE
DE Eddie Yarbrough (6-3, 251, Sr.)
DT Chase Appleby (6-0, 260, Jr.)
NG Uso Olive (6-1, 301, Jr.)
DE Siaosi Hala'api'api (6-2, 255, Sr.)
LB Lucas Wacha (6-1, 214, Jr.)
LB Malkaam Muhammad (6-0, 228, Sr.)
LB Will Tutein (6-2, 210, Jr.)
CB Robert Priester (5-9, 168, So.)
CB Tyran Finley (5-9, 177, Sr.)
FS Tim Kamana (5-11, 196, So.)
SS Chavez Pownell Jr. (5-11, 192, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS
K Justin Martin (5-10, 178, Jr.)
P Ethan Wood (6-3, 173, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

When Craig Bohl was hired last year, it wasn't with the intent of going 4-8 and missing the postseason. In fairness, 2014 was a transition year. Wyoming was looking to run a pro style offense after running a spread offense. Defensively, the scheme was different too so finding the right personnel and executing on a consistent basis was a challenge.

But Year Two figures to go a lot smoother. Yes, the Cowboys need a quarterback after Colby Kirkegaard finished up his final year and threw for 2,660 yards and 12 touchdowns. But with a solid running game and an experienced offensive line, it's not a make-or-break situation as it is with other teams in the Mountain West (think Nevada and Air Force). Indiana transfer Cameron Coffman will get a long look to win the starting QB job.

The Cowboys return three starters on the offensive line–center Rafe Kiely, left guard Chase Roullier and left tackle Ryan Cummings. It's easy to guess which way Wyoming will run when they give it to running back Shaun Wick (83.7 yards per game).

Defensively, Wyoming has Eddie Yarbrough, its two-time all-conference end, leading a group that will be able to win a lot of battles at the point of attack. Siaosi Hala'api'api figures to get a lot of opportunities to make plays at the other end spot as teams look to double up on Yarbrough.

Junior Ethan Wood has proved to be a reliable punter, averaging 41.4 yards as a sophomore.

BOTTOM LINE Bohl knows how to win–witness what he did at North Dakota State. The Pokes should post a winning record and grab a bowl bid, say, the New Mexico Bowl. Albuquerque, anyone?

5 AIR FORCE
FALCONS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Morgan State	
S.12	San Jose State	
S.19	@ MICHIGAN STATE	
O.3	@ NAVY	30-21
O.10	Wyoming	13-17
O.17	@ COLORADO STATE	27-24
O.24	Fresno State	
O.31	@ HAWAII	
N.7	Army	23-6
N.14	Utah State	16-34
N.20	@ BOISE STATE	28-14
N.28	@ NEW MEXICO	35-31

COACH
Troy Calhoun
Ninth year (59-44)
Career record: 59-44

Offensive coordinators:
Clay Hendrix (ninth year)
Mike Thiessen (sixth year)
Defensive coordinator:
Steve Russ (fourth year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat Western Michigan in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, 38-24)
Stadium: Falcon Stadium (46,692)
Tickets: 719-472-1895
Site: Colorado Springs, Colo.
Website: goairforcefalcons.com
Twitter: @AFFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Nate Romine (5-11, 195, Jr.)
RB Jacobi Owens (5-11, 190, Jr.)
FB D.J. Johnson (5-9, 210, Jr.)
LT Matt Rochell (6-3, 260, Sr.)
LG Colin Sandor (6-3, 275, Jr.)
C Dylan Vail (6-1, 265, Jr.)
RG Andrew Ruechel (6-1, 240, Sr.)
RT Sevrin Remmo (6-3, 240, Sr.)
TE Garrett Griffin (6-4, 225, Sr.)
WR Jalen Robinette (6-3, 220, Jr.)
WR Garrett Brown (5-9, 170, Sr.)

DEFENSE
DE Alex Hansen (6-2, 260, Sr.)
DT Samuel Byers (6-5, 257, Jr.)
NG David Harris (6-0, 255, Jr.)
LB Connor Healy (6-0, 225, Sr.)
LB Ryan Watson (6-3, 240, Jr.)
LB Patrick Healy (6-0, 225, Jr.)
LB Dexter Walker (6-0, 205, Sr.)
CB Jesse Washington (6-0, 180, Jr.)
CB Hayes Linn (6-0, 175, Jr.)
FS Kalon Baker (6-0, 185, Sr.)
SS Weston Steelhammer (6-2, 200, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS
K Drew Oehrle (6-0, 160, Sr.)
P Brett Dunn (5-10, 190, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

The Falcons bounced back nicely from a dreadful 2013 season which saw them go 2-10 and winless in the Mountain West. A 10-3 overall record, a 5-3 season in conference play and a 38-24 win over Western Michigan in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl earned coach Troy Calhoun a five year contract extension.

But for Air Force to duplicate what it did in 2014 and not revert back to 2013, the Falcons are going to have to fill several key gaps, not the least of which is replacing Kale Pearson at quarterback. He was ninth in the conference in total offense with 2,277 yards. More importantly, he had experience running the Falcons' option attack and it takes time to learn how to run that offense effectively.

Nate Romine backed up Pearson last year and in limited action he threw for 208 yards. The junior will likely battle senior Karson Roberts for the starting QB job. Whoever gets the job will be handing the ball off to running back Jacobi Owens, who rushed for 1,054 yards and scored five touchdowns as a sophomore.

There are lots of holes to fill on a defense that limited teams to just 24.2 points a game. Only four starters return, led by end Alex Hansen, an all-conference selection who had 10 tackles for loss, and Weston Steelhammer, a junior strong safety who had six interceptions last year, tied for third-most in the conference.

The Falcons always play a challenging schedule and this year is no different with road games at Michigan State, Navy, Hawaii and Boise State.

BOTTOM LINE With the starter at QB unknown, let alone the uncertainties that come with both options, it's going to be a battle to have a winning record and get back to a bowl game.

6 NEW MEXICO
LOBOS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Mississippi Valley State	
S.12	Tulsa	
S.18	@ ARIZONA STATE	23-58
S.26	@ WYOMING	36-30
O.3	New Mexico State	38-35
O.10	@ NEVADA	
O.17	Hawaii	
O.24	@ SAN JOSE STATE	
N.7	Utah State	21-28
N.14	@ BOISE STATE	49-60
N.21	Colorado State	20-58
N.28	Air Force	31-35

COACH
Bob Davie
Fourth year (11-26)
Career record: 46-51

Offensive coordinator:
Bob DeBesse (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator:
Kevin Cosgrove (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 4-8
Stadium: University Stadium (39,224)
Tickets: 800-955-HOWL
Site: Albuquerque, N.M.
Website: golobos.com
Twitter: @NewMexicoFB

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Lamar Jordan (5-10, 183, So.)
RB Jhurell Pressley (5-10, 200, Sr.)
RB Teriyon Gipson (5-8, 176, Jr.)
LT Reno Henderson (6-3, 260, Jr.)
LG Eden Mahina (6-3, 290, Sr.)
C Garrett Adcock (6-2, 282, Jr.)
RG Bryan Oldenkamp (6-4, 310, Sr.)
RT Johnny Vizcaino (6-2, 275, Jr.)
TE Reece White (6-1, 220, Sr.)
WR Carlos Wiggins (5-8, 162, Sr.)
WR Dameon Gamblin (5-10, 163, Jr.)

DEFENSE
DE Nik D'Avanzo (6-3, 285, Jr.)
NT Cole Juarez (6-2, 305, Sr.)
DE Garrett Hughes (6-1, 270, So.)
LB Donnie White (6-1, 227, Jr.)
LB Dakota Cox (6-0, 230, Jr.)
LB Kimmie Carson (6-0, 228, So.)
CB Isaiah Brown (5-11, 180, Jr.)
CB Cranston Jones (5-8, 167, Sr.)
FS Daniel Henry (6-0, 170, Jr.)
SS Ricky Bennett (6-0, 210, So.)
SS Ryan Santos (5-10, 186, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS
K Jason Sanders (5-10, 170, So.)
P Zack Rogers (5-9, 190, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

There are two signs that point to a team that is struggling: First, one of your players leads the conference in tackles, which means your defense is probably on the field longer than it would like to be. Second, you have one of the best punters in the league, which means your offense isn't staying on the field long enough.

And so it goes at New Mexico, where Bob Davie has yet to produce a winning campaign in three seasons. In 2014, Lobos shared the basement of the Mountain Division with Wyoming. Of course, given the mess Davie had to clean up following the horror show that was the Mike Locksley Era, he should get a little more slack cut his way.

There are some assets. Dakota Cox is one of them. The junior linebacker led the league in tackles with 12.9 per game despite playing just nine games due to an ACL injury. He should be 100 percent for the start of the season.

Offensively, Jhurell Pressley is the Lobos' primary weapon. The senior running back rushed for 1,083 yards and scored 12 touchdowns in 2014. And with the quarterback situation up in the air, look for Davie to go with the sure thing.

But that also means the other team will be looking to stop the run. New Mexico was dead last in the MWC in first downs with 205. Of those, only 41 came through the air. At some point, Davie needs to find a little bit of balance in his attack. Otherwise, Zack Rogers is going to have a busy senior season. The Lobos' punter was used 56 times last year and averaged 42.6 yards per boot.

BOTTOM LINE With little depth and no clear-cut choice at quarterback, it looks like it'll be more of the same for New Mexico: another losing season and no bowl game.

SAN DIEGO STATE

AZTECS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1

Donnel Pumphrey

The Aztecs tied Fresno State for the division title in 2014 thanks to a 24-13 loss to the Bulldogs back on Oct. 3. This year, the game is in San Diego but coach Rocky Long is hoping the West Division doesn't come down to one game.

San Diego State has the conference's top rusher in Donnel Pumphrey (1,867 yards, 6.8 yards per carry, 20 touchdowns). So while SDSU figures out who will ultimately replace Quinn Kaehler at quarterback, it does so knowing the Aztecs can move the ball and compete.

As for who that someone will be, spring practice didn't help establish a No. 1. Former Oregon backup Jake Rodrigues is battling Kentucky transfer Maxwell Smith and redshirt freshman Drew Anderson for the job.

"I can't tell who the starter is right now," Long said after the team's spring game in late March.

Senior guard Darrell Greene, an all-conference honorable mention selection, will head up the O-line and senior right tackle Pearce Slater gives the Aztecs experience up front.

Defensively, San Diego State has a lot of speed and an ability to get to the ballcarrier or the quarterback. Last year, the Aztecs were first in the Mountain West in total defense (332.5 yards a game) and second in scoring defense (19.8 points a game).

The secondary, in particular, will be tough to throw against. Junior cornerback Damontae Kazee had 13 pass breakups as a sophomore and along with senior cornerback J.J. Whittaker and junior safety Malik Smith, they are a very talented group.

As for the special teams, Long has shored up that unit. Donny Hageman is a reliable kicker (20-for-25 on field goals last year). Rashaad Penny averaged 25 yards per kickoff return and Lloyd Mills averaged 11.4 yards per punt return and had a 67-yard TD return.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Donnel Pumphrey, RB

At 5-9 and 170 pounds, Pumphrey is living proof that big things come in small packages. The slippery junior tailback from Las Vegas bounced around for 1,867 rushing yards and 20 touchdowns last year, averaging a staggering 146.2 yards per game and twice eclipsing 200 rushing yards, including a season-high 261 in a 38-7 win over San Jose State in the conference finale. The biggest testament to Pumphrey's importance as a playmaker? His four lowest rushing totals came in four of the Aztecs' six losses.

BOTTOM LINE

There's still room for improvement. Remember, the Aztecs went 7-6 last year and were 1-5 on the road. San Diego State should be good enough to win the division, return to a decent-sized bowl again and perhaps post double-digit wins. But for that to happen, the Aztecs need to find a reliable quarterback, get another solid season from the defense and find a way to win away from Qualcomm Stadium.

Mountain West - West

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	San Diego	
S.12	@CALIFORNIA	
S.19	South Alabama	
S.26	@PENN STATE	
O.3	Fresno State	13-24
O.10	@HAWAII	20-10
O.17	@SAN JOSE STATE	38-7
O.23	Utah State	
O.31	@COLORADO STATE	
N.14	Wyoming	
N.21	@UNLV	34-17
N.28	Nevada	14-30

COACH

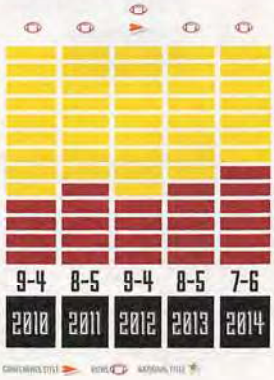
Rocky Long
Fifth year (32-20)
Career record: 97-89

Offensive coordinator: Jeff Horton (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Rocky Long (seventh year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Navy in the Poinsettia Bowl, 17-16)
Stadium: Qualcomm Stadium (70,561)
Tickets: 619-283-SDSU
Site: San Diego
Website: goaztecs.com
Twitter: @Aztec_Football

5-YEAR RECORD 41-24



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Maxwell Smith (6-5, 235, Sr.)
RB	Donnel Pumphrey (5-9, 170, Jr.)
FB	Dakota Gordon (5-10, 235, Sr.)
LT	Kwayde Miller (6-7, 310, Jr.)
LG	Nico Siragusa (6-5, 325, Jr.)
C	Arthur Flores (6-5, 305, Jr.)
RG	Darrell Greene (6-4, 315, Sr.)
RT	Pearce Slater (6-7, 335, Sr.)
TE	Daniel Brunskill (6-5, 250, Jr.)
WR	Lloyd Mills (5-10, 165, Jr.)
WR	Mikah Holder (6-0, 175, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jon Sanchez (6-2, 260, Sr.)
DT	Alex Barrett (6-3, 260, Jr.)
DE	Dakota Turner (6-3, 235, So.)
LB	Calvin Munson (6-1, 235, Jr.)
LB	Fred Melifonwu (6-5, 235, So.)
LB	Jay Henderson (6-2, 205, So.)
CB	Damontae Kazee (5-11, 180, Jr.)
CB	J.J. Whittaker (5-10, 180, Sr.)
FS	Na'im McGee (6-0, 200, Jr.)
SS	Trey Lomax (5-11, 185, So.)
SS	Malik Smith (6-0, 185, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Donny Hageman (6-1, 170, Sr.)
P	Tanner Blain (6-0, 210, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

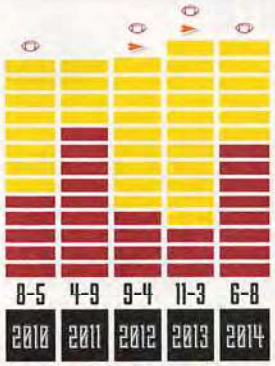
1. **Desean Holmes,** WR ★★★★
2. **Kyahva Tezino,** LB ★★★★
3. **John Carroll,** TE ★★★

The Aztecs are no strangers to plucking some gems from the fertile California recruiting grounds. This class has a few key standouts, led by 247Sports Composite four-star athlete Desean Holmes and four-star linebacker Kyavha Tezino. Both, along with underrated tight end John Carroll, will have a chance to make an immediate impact on the field for San Diego State. One key will be the development of five incoming offensive linemen.

PUMPHREY: GERRY BROOME / AP

FRESNO STATE BULLDOGS

5-YEAR RECORD 38-29



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Zack Greenlee (6-1, 200, So.)
RB Marteze Waller (5-11, 209, Sr.)
LT Alex Fifita (6-4, 303, Sr.)
LG Aaron Mitchell (6-2, 291, So.)
C Bo Bonnheim (6-2, 283, Sr.)
RG Jacob Vazquez (6-2, 283, Jr.)
RT Justin Northern (6-5, 285, Sr.)
TE Chad Olsen (6-5, 222, So.)
WR Aaron Peck (6-3, 213, Sr.)
WR Delvon Hardaway (6-1, 191, So.)
WR Justin Johnson (6-1, 207, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Todd Hunt (6-3, 263, Sr.)
NG Nathan Madsen (6-4, 275, So.)
DE Claudell Louis (6-4, 292, Sr.)
LB Xavier Ulutu (6-1, 248, So.)
LB Kyrie Wilson (6-2, 238, Sr.)
LB Ejiro Ederaine (6-3, 221, Sr.)
LB Brandon Hughes (6-3, 216, Jr.)
CB Charles Washington (5-11, 197, Sr.)
CB Malcolm Washington (6-2, 165, So.)
FS Shannon Edwards (5-11, 191, Sr.)
SS Dalen Jones (6-1, 196, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Jimmy Camacho (5-10, 160, Jr.)
P Garrett Swanson (6-0, 217, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Chason Virgil,** QB ★★★
2. **Bryson Oglesby,** RB ★★★
3. **Mike Bell,** CB ★★★

It could almost be considered theft with the signing of West Mesquite (Texas) quarterback Chason Virgil for Fresno State. After backing away from a longtime commitment to Mississippi State, the pro-style quarterback found a home with the Bulldogs. Juco wide receiver Josiah Blandin (6-4, 195 pounds) could also help make an immediate impact. However, Fresno State didn't lose track of fertile northern California. Look for tight end Jared Rice and cornerback A.J. Greeley to have an immediate impact.

Marteze Waller

WALLER: OTTO KITSINGER / AP

Think it's easy to replace a star quarterback? The Bulldogs needed some time to get used to life without Derek Carr last year and even after Fresno State settled on Brian Burrell, it was still a bit of a roller coaster ride. Lose three, win three, lose three, win three, lose two. That's what FSU's 6-8 season looked like in 2014.

Yes, the Bulldogs got to a bowl game but they were handled rather easily by Rice in the Hawaii Bowl, losing 30-6. And as the team looked ahead to 2015, it once again has to come up with a starting quarterback. Will it be sophomore Zack Greenlee? Will it be sophomore Kilton Anderson? Or maybe true freshman Chason Virgil wins the job.

When spring practice ended March 28th, DeRuyter had not committed to a starting quarterback.

Senior running back Marteze Waller will be asked to shoulder much of the burden offensively. Last year, Waller rushed for 1,368 yards and scored 11 touchdowns. He has the benefit of running behind an experienced offensive line as center Bo Bonnheim, along with tackles Justin Northern and Alex Fifita, have logged a lot of minutes the past couple of years.

And whoever winds up as the QB won't have Josh Harper to throw to. Harper has graduated and with him went 90 receptions and seven touchdowns. Aaron Peck is back (32 receptions) and he may be the primary target this year. Redshirt freshmen Keyan Williams and KeeSean Johnson are also expected to contribute.

Defensively, Fresno State ranked toward the bottom in the Mountain West with teams averaging 32.4 points and 456 yards per game against the Bulldogs. The linebacking corps is decent but health is an issue. Still, Brandon Hughes and Kyrie Wilson are proven performers and they will help senior linemen Todd Hunt and Claudell Louis control the line of scrimmage.

The Bulldogs have an experienced special-teams unit with punter Garrett Swanson and placekicker Jimmy Camacho. That's one less concern for DeRuyter.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Marteze Waller, RB

How tough is Waller? On Nov. 8, the 5-11, 209-pound senior injured his shoulder in a win against San Jose State during a 145-yard rushing performance. The next week, after just six carries, he was knocked out of the game—a 40-20 win against Nevada—on a helmet-to-helmet hit. Fresh off the two injuries, he entered a league matchup against Hawaii Nov. 29 and rushed for 137 yards and two touchdowns to help give Fresno State a 28-21 victory.

BOTTOM LINE

There are a lot of holes that need replacing and a lot of unknown variables facing the Bulldogs. It will be a challenge to repeat what they did in 2014. And with a tough nonconference schedule that includes Ole Miss, Utah and BYU, 2015 may be a year where Fresno State has to reboot.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **2**

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	Abilene Christian	
S.12	@OLE MISS	
S.19	Utah	27-59
S.26	@SAN JOSE STATE	38-24
O.3	@SAN DIEGO STATE	24-13
O.10	Utah State	
O.16	UNLV	27-30
O.24	@AIR FORCE	
N.5	Nevada	40-20
N.14	@HAWAII	28-21
N.21	@BYU	
N.28	Colorado State	

COACH

Tim DeRuyter
Fourth year (26-14)
Career record: 27-14

Offensive coordinator: Dave Schramm (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator: Nick Toth (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 6-8
(Lost to Rice in the Hawaii Bowl, 30-6)
Stadium: Bulldog Stadium (41,031)
Tickets: 559-278-DOGS
Site: Fresno, Calif.
Website: gobulldogs.com
Twitter: @FSAthletics

3 NEVADA WOLF PACK

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	UC Davis	
S.12	Arizona	28-35
S.19	@TEXAS A&M	
S.26	@BUFFALO	
O.3	UNLV	49-27
O.10	New Mexico	
O.17	@WYOMING	
O.24	Hawaii	26-18
N.5	@FRESNO STATE	20-40
N.14	San Jose State	21-10
N.21	@UTAH STATE	
N.28	@SAN DIEGO STATE	30-14

COACH

Brian Polian
Third year (11-14)
Career record: 11-14
Offensive coordinator: Nick Rolovich (fourth year)
Defensive coordinators: Scott Boone (second year)
Bill Teerlinck (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Louisiana in the New Orleans Bowl, 16-3)
Stadium: Mackay Stadium (30,000)
Tickets: 775-348-PACK
Site: Reno, Nev.
Website: nevadawolfpack.com
Twitter: @NevadaFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Tyler Stewart (6-4, 220, Jr.)
RB Don Jackson (5-10, 210, Sr.)
LT Austin Corbett (6-4, 280, So.)
LG Adam Khouri (6-3, 295, So.)
C Jeremy Macauley (6-1, 305, Jr.)
RG Jonathan Eitzman (6-3, 260, So.)
RT Humberto Lopez (6-5, 305, Jr.)
TE Jarred Gipson (6-1, 240, Jr.)
WR Hasaan Henderson (6-5, 220, Jr.)
WR Brayden Sanchez (5-11, 200, Jr.)
WR Jerico Richardson (5-11, 190, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Ian Seau (6-2, 255, Sr.)
NG Salesa Faraimo (6-2, 275, Jr.)
DT Rykeem Yates (6-2, 270, Sr.)
DE Lenny Jones (6-3, 270, Sr.)
LB Bryan Lane Jr. (6-4, 220, Sr.)
LB Jordan Dobrich (6-2, 235, Sr.)
LB Matthew Lyons (6-2, 230, Sr.)
CB Ahki Muhammad (5-9, 180, Fr.)
CB Elijah Moody (5-11, 175, Fr.)
FS Asauni Rufus (6-0, 185, Fr.)
SS Kendall Johnson (6-0, 180, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K Brent Zuzo (5-10, 175, Jr.)
P Alex Boy (6-3, 195, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

The transition to Brian Polian's style of coaching continues in Reno and look for Year Three of his regime to yield some positive results. The Wolf Pack played with more of an edge last year and it earned it a 7-6 overall record and a spot in the New Orleans Bowl. More importantly, Nevada competed well in conference play, going 4-4 in the West Division.

A lot of that success was due to senior quarterback Cody Fajardo, who had an outstanding career. But Fajardo is gone and Polian needs to find a suitable replacement. Tyler Stewart, a junior, would appear to have the inside track given his experience in backing up Fajardo.

Senior running back Don Jackson should take some of the heat off the QB. Jackson rushed for 957 yards last year and scored seven touchdowns.

Hasaan Henderson is turning out to be a reliable commodity at wide receiver as he caught 45 passes and averaged 12.9 yards a catch.

Ian Seau, the nephew of the late Junior Seau, is Nevada's top lineman. He can rush the quarterback and also play the run effectively and, along with senior Rykeem Yates, should help the defense improve.

Punter Alex Boy was a second-team all-conference selection and led the league with a 44.3-yard average.

Beyond the field, Mackay Stadium is getting a $35 million face-lift. That will be a strong selling point to recruits and the 15-member signing class of 2015 should yield some talent right away.

BOTTOM LINE: Polian has this program moving in the right direction and if he can find a serviceable quarterback, Nevada should return to a bowl game for the second consecutive year.

4 SAN JOSE STATE SPARTANS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	New Hampshire	
S.12	@AIR FORCE	
S.19	@OREGON STATE	
S.26	Fresno State	24-38
O.3	@AUBURN	13-59
O.10	@UNLV	33-10
O.17	San Diego State	7-38
O.24	New Mexico	
N.6	BYU	
N.14	@NEVADA	10-21
N.21	@HAWAII	0-13
N.27	Boise State	

COACH

Ron Caragher
Third year (9-15)
Career record: 53-37
Offensive coordinator: Al Borges (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Greg Robinson (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: Spartan Stadium (30,456)
Tickets: 877-SJSU-TIX
Site: San Jose
Website: sjsuspartans.com
Twitter: @SJSUAthletics

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Joe Gray (6-2, 207, Sr.)
RB Tyler Ervin (5-10, 177, Sr.)
RB Shane Smith (6-2, 238, Jr.)
LT Wes Schweitzer (6-5, 301, Sr.)
LG Jeremiah Kolone (6-3, 285, So.)
C Keoni Taylor (6-3, 293, So.)
RG Chris Gonzalez (6-3, 295, So.)
RT Nate Velichko (6-7, 300, So.)
TE Billy Freeman (6-3, 232, Jr.)
WR Tyler Winston (6-2, 191, Jr.)
WR Tim Crawley (5-7, 170, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Cedric Lousi (6-3, 261, Sr.)
DT Tony Popovich (6-2, 262, Sr.)
DT Keenan Sykes (6-3, 277, Jr.)
DE Eugene Taylor (6-3, 233, Jr.)
LB Christian Tago (6-1, 237, Jr.)
LB William Ossai (6-2, 225, So.)
LB Jared Leaf (6-2, 240, Sr.)
CB Jimmy Pruitt (6-0, 203, Sr.)
CB Cleveland Wallace III (5-11, 177, Jr.)
FS Maurice McKnight (6-0, 181, So.)
SS Vincente Miles Jr. (6-1, 196, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Austin Lopez (6-0, 209, Sr.)
P Michael Carrizosa (5-10, 229, So.)

Sporting News All-American

While many Mountain West teams are trying to figure out who will be their starting quarterback, no such issues exists in San Jose. Joe Gray is the man and he has an opportunity to get the program back on track and back to a bowl game.

Coach Ron Caragher would like nothing better than to see a repeat of 2012 when San Jose State won 11 games, including the Military Bowl.

Gray, a 6-2, 207-pound senior, completed 63.6 percent of his passes, throwing for 2,305 yards and 11 touchdowns while being intercepted just nine times last year. He possesses a strong arm and makes good decisions with the football. But that's easy to do when you have Tyler Winston catching those passes. The junior was second in the conference in receptions per game last year, hauling in 6.5 balls a contest.

The offensive line has experience and there's more depth than there was a year ago. That should give new offensive coordinator Al Borges some tools to work with as he tries to put some energy into an attack that generated just 19.3 points per game last season.

Defensively, San Jose State was decent against the pass but not great in stopping the run. Cornerbacks Cleveland Wallace III and Jimmy Pruitt were all-conference last year and they will anchor a good secondary. Christian Tago (96 tackles) was third best among linebackers in tackles per game in the Mountain West.

BOTTOM LINE: Gray can make San Jose State fans forget about the 3-9 disaster of last year and, if the defense can get its act together, a winning season is a distinct possibility. A fast start will help Caragher get things turned around.

5 HAWAII WARRIORS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	Colorado	12-21
S.12	@OHIO STATE	
S.19	UC Davis	
S.26	@WISCONSIN	
O.3	@BOISE STATE	
O.10	San Diego State	10-20
O.17	@NEW MEXICO	
O.24	@NEVADA	18-26
O.31	Air Force	
N.7	@UNLV	37-35
N.14	Fresno State	21-28
N.21	San Jose State	13-0
N.28	Louisiana-Monroe	

COACH

Norm Chow
Fourth year (8-29)
Career record: 8-29

Offensive coordinator: Don Bailey (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Tom Mason (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 4-9
Stadium: Aloha Stadium (50,000)
Tickets: 808-944-2697
Site: Honolulu
Website: hawaiiathletics.com
Twitter: @HawaiiFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Ikaika Woolsey (6-1, 210, Jr.)
RB Steven Lakalaka (5-10, 215, Jr.)
FB Justin Vele (6-0, 245, Sr.)
LT Ben Clarke (6-3, 285, Sr.)
LG Dejon Allen (6-2, 270, So.)
C Brenden Urban (6-1, 295, Sr.)
RG Elijah Tupai (6-4, 265, So.)
RT Leo Koloamatangi (6-5, 275, Jr.)
TE Harold Moleni (6-2, 245, Sr.)
WR Marcus Kemp (6-4, 185, Jr.)
WR Quinton Pedroza (6-2, 220, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Kennedy Tulimasealii (6-1, 280, Jr.)
NT Penitito Faalologo (5-11, 250, So.)
DE Luke Shawley (6-3, 240, Sr.)
LB Jerrol Garcia-Williams (6-2, 215, Sr.)
LB Simon Poti (6-0, 220, Sr.)
LB Lance Williams (6-0, 220, Sr.)
LB Jeremy Castro (6-4, 240, So.)
CB Ne'Quan Phillips (5-9, 185, Sr.)
CB Nick Nelson (6-0, 190, So.)
FS Trayvon Henderson (6-0, 190, Jr.)
SS Daniel Lewis (5-11, 180, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K Kainoa McDonald (5-4, 160, Fr.)
P Alex Trifonovitch (6-1, 180, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

In three seasons, Norm Chow has gone 8-29. At most schools, that gets you fired. But at Hawaii, where resources are scarce and there has been talk of dropping football because it's such a money-loser, there's no funding available to buy Chow out and spend even more on a new coach.

There was some good news from last year. The team won four games, equal to what Chow accomplished in his first two years, and didn't finish last in the conference.

Hawaii's defense was a big part of the improvement from 2013 to 2014. It allowed 418.2 yards per game in the Mountain West where teams can go for 500 or more yards on any given day. So to be in the middle of the pack defensively is a good thing. The problem is many of those defenders have graduated.

Only six defensive starters are back. Junior Trayvon Henderson is coming off a very good year at free safety where he had 63 tackles. Linebacker Simon Poti was right alongside with 63 tackles and two sacks.

Offensively, senior tackle Ben Clarke has been overlooked because his unit has struggled to perform. But he has played well in his three years with the Rainbow Warriors and he will lead an offensive line that will try to protect whoever the starting quarterback turns out to be. It may be junior Ikaika Woolsey.

He better be able to get the ball to Marcus Kemp, Hawaii's fine receiver who can gain those critical yards after catch.

BOTTOM LINE: There aren't enough playmakers on offense and not enough experience on defense to build off the 4-9 record of a year ago. Most likely, the Rainbow Warriors regress a bit and the fan base gets a little more agitated.

6 UNLV REBELS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@NORTHERN ILLINOIS	34-48
S.12	UCLA	
S.19	@MICHIGAN	
S.26	Idaho State	
O.3	@NEVADA	27-49
O.10	San Jose State	10-33
O.16	@FRESNO STATE	30-27
O.31	Boise State	
N.7	Hawaii	35-37
N.14	@COLORADO STATE	
N.21	San Diego State	17-34
N.28	@WYOMING	

COACH

Tony Sanchez
First year

Offensive coordinator: Barney Cotton (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Kent Baer (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 2-11
Stadium: Sam Boyd Stadium (36,800)
Tickets: 702-739-FANS
Site: Las Vegas
Website: unlvrebels.com
Twitter: @UNLVAthletics

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Kurt Palandech (6-1, 190, Jr.)
RB Keith Whitely (5-9, 185, Jr.)
FB Marc Philippi (5-10, 220, Jr.)
LT Kyle Saxelid (6-7, 270, So.)
LG Chris Lopez (6-4, 285, So.)
C Will Kreitler (6-0, 295, Jr.)
RG Nick Gstrein (6-4, 295, Sr.)
RT Eric Noone (6-2, 300, Jr.)
TE Jake Phillips (6-6, 255, Sr.)
WR Devonte Boyd (6-1, 175, So.)
WR Anthony Williams (5-11, 190, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Sonny Sanitoa (6-3, 260, Sr.)
DT Tuli Fakauho (6-1, 300, Sr.)
DE Dominic Baldwin (6-5, 240, Jr.)
LB Tau Lotulelei (6-1, 220, Jr.)
LB Matt Lea (5-10, 210, So.)
LB Ryan McAleenan (6-2, 230, Jr.)
LB Iggy Porchia (6-2, 225, Jr.)
CB Jay'Onn Myles (5-8, 175, Jr.)
CB Torry McTyer (6-0, 180, Jr.)
FS Kenny Keys (6-4, 190, Sr.)
SS Peni Vea (6-1, 205, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Jonathan Leiva (5-11, 175, Sr.)
P Logan Yunker (6-2, 200, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Mike Sanford couldn't get it done. Neither could Bobby Hauck. So the Rebels are reaching out to Tony Sanchez, who turned Las Vegas' Bishop Gorman High School into a national power.

Sanchez hit the ground running, bringing in a stellar recruiting class and getting money raised to build an indoor practice facility, something that has long been needed, along with an academic center. And he put the returning players on notice that every job is open, even if you're a star.

Wide receiver Devonte Boyd happens to be one of those select few. The Mountain West Freshman of the Year had 65 receptions and scored four touchdowns while averaging 15.1 yards a catch. You will see him on the field for sure.

You'll also see strong safety Peni Vea. Vea was an honorable mention all-conference performer as a junior and had 88 total tackles, second to junior linebacker Tau Lotulelei (99), the other Rebel who'll see the field.

Offensively, the quarterback job is indeed wide open and Blake Decker, who took the majority of snaps a year ago (2,886 yards, 15 touchdowns, 18 interceptions) is being pressed hard by redshirt freshman Kevin Thomson and junior-college transfer Kurt Palandech.

Returning running backs Keith Whitely and George Naufahu shouldn't feel secure either. Linebacker Marc Philippi switched to offense in the spring and he could emerge as the starter.

BOTTOM LINE: Sanchez has brought a new energy level to the program and there are signs the future may be bright for the Rebels. But the reality is a new system with a tough schedule will make wins hard to come by.

PROJECTED FINISH

North Division

1. **Oregon**
   Bowl Projection: CFP Semifinals (Orange Bowl)
2. **Stanford**
   Bowl Projection: Holiday Bowl
3. **Washington**
   Bowl Projection: Sun Bowl
4. **California**
   Bowl Projection: Hawaii Bowl
5. **Oregon State**
6. **Washington State**

South Division

1. **USC**
   Bowl Projection: Rose Bowl
2. **UCLA**
   Bowl Projection: Alamo Bowl
3. **Arizona**
   Bowl Projection: Foster Farms Bowl
4. **Arizona State**
   Bowl Projection: Las Vegas Bowl
5. **Utah**
   Bowl Projection: Cactus Bowl
6. **Colorado**

Vernon Adams, QB, Oregon

Pac-12 still loaded with great QBs/offenses despite loss of Mariota, Hundley

BY BRUCE PASCOE | *Arizona Daily Star (Tucson)*

Marcus Mariota and his Heisman Trophy are gone, and that's only one reason the balance of power has shifted southward in the Pac-12. Virtually every South team is on an upward arc, even (in very relative terms) at cellar-dwelling Colorado.

USC has shaken off a coaching change and NCAA sanctions enough to get back in the conference title hunt, while UCLA just has to plug in a new quarterback to a team loaded with experienced talent on both sides of the ball.

At Arizona State, quarterback Mike Bercovici's long wait for a starting job will be rewarded with plenty of playmaking threats around him, while Arizona has plenty of offensive firepower—and Lombardi Award winner Scooby Wright—returning from the bunch that wrestled away the South Division title last season.

There are signs of dysfunction in Utah, where both coordinators took off, but the Utes are coming off their first winning season in conference play. And Colorado, well, is at least making games closer.

The North Division isn't as deep but Oregon and Stanford still have College Football Playoff potential if they can answer a few questions: The Ducks need somebody—probably dynamic FCS transfer quarterback Vernon Adams—to take the keys of their explosive offense, while Stanford has to replace eight starters from its rigid defense. The other four teams in the North are all in varying stages of rebuild, the most notable being Oregon State, which is shifting from a pro-style offense under longtime former coach Mike Riley to new boss Gary Andersen's spread attack.

While Mariota and UCLA's Brett Hundley aren't on the conference marquee anymore, there are compelling quarterbacks to watch in USC's Cody Kessler and Cal's Jared Goff, plus a boatload of talented rushers. Six of the seven Pac-12 running backs who gained 1,000 or more yards last season return, and Arizona State is so loaded that it can afford to move one of them, D.J. Foster, to wide receiver.

Last season, the Pac-12 had six teams win nine or more games and went 6-3 in bowl games. Even if nobody gets in the CFP this time, the overall depth in the conference suggests that sort of success is sustainable.

Myles Jack, LB, UCLA

KESSLER: RICK SCUTERI / AP; ADAMS: ELAINE THOMPSON / AP; JACK: MARK J. TERRILL / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Nickels: With all the spread offenses in the Pac-12, it's no surprise that nickel packages keep popping up. New defensive coordinators at Washington State and Oregon State have jumped on board, too.**

2015 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by J.C. Shurburtt, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RANK	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	POINTS
1	USC	26	4	14	8	310.44
2	UCLA	19	3	10	6	269.68
3	Oregon	22	1	6	15	245.79
4	Arizona State	23	0	8	15	234.92
5	Stanford	22	0	5	17	220.45
6	Washington	24	0	5	18	215.59
7	California	24	0	3	19	198.12
8	Arizona	25	0	1	24	186.46
9	Washington State	23	0	1	19	184.87
10	Utah	24	0	0	23	183.16
11	Oregon State	19	0	0	18	164.78
12	Colorado	19	0	1	16	162.12

ALL-PAC-12

OFFENSE

- QB **Cody Kessler,** Sr., USC
- RB **Royce Freeman,** So., Oregon
- RB **Devontae Booker,** Sr., Utah
- OL **Max Tuerk,** Sr., USC
- OL **Jake Brendel,** Sr., UCLA
- OL **Nick Kelly,** Sr., Arizona State
- OL **Kyle Murphy,** Sr., Stanford
- OL **Toa Lobendahn,** So., USC
- WR **Nelson Spruce,** Sr., Colorado
- WR **JuJu Smith,** So., USC
- WR **Cayleb Jones,** Jr., Arizona

DEFENSE

- DL **Kenny Clark,** Jr., UCLA
- DL **Eddie Vanderdoes,** Jr., UCLA
- DL **DeForest Buckner,** Sr., Oregon
- DL **Hunter Dimick,** Jr., Utah
- LB **Myles Jack,** Jr., UCLA
- LB **Scooby Wright,** Jr., Arizona
- LB **Blake Martinez,** Sr., Stanford
- DB **Su'a Cravens,** Jr., USC
- DB **Fabian Moreau,** Sr., UCLA
- DB **Adoree' Jackson,** So., USC
- DB **Budda Baker,** So., Washington

SPECIALISTS

- K **Andy Phillips,** Jr., Utah
- P **Tom Hackett,** Sr., Utah

PRESEASON MVP

Hard to believe a USC quarterback actually gets overlooked, but while the eyes were on Marcus Mariota and Brett Hundley last season, it happened. Kessler threw for a Pac-12-record-tying 39 touchdowns against only five interceptions. And now he has even more talent around him.

Cody Kessler

OVERRATED

UTAH

The Utes' nine wins last season covered up simmering chemistry issues: Kyle Whittingham lost both his coordinators, while appearing to have a strained relationship with A.D. Chris Hill.

UNDERRATED

ARIZONA

The Wildcats' tepid finish last season overshadowed a big year of improvement. Rich Rodriguez has plenty of talent returning and his recruiting keeps picking up steam.

2 Rushers: The Pac-12 returns eight of its top 10 rushers and the stats could get crazy this season considering that a number of teams have rebuilding defensive fronts.

3 Versatility: Shaq Thompson is gone but UCLA's Myles Jack (RB/LB), Arizona State's Kalen Ballage and Washington's Budda Baker and John Ross are among the league's two-way threats.

RATING THE PAC-12

FASTEST RECEIVER
Devon Allen, Oregon
Elite hurdler missed CFP title game with a knee injury but a bigger global stage could await in 2016 Rio Olympics.

BEST HANDS
Nelson Spruce, WR, Colorado
Former high school baseball infielder rarely makes errors.

BEST PASSING QB
Cody Kessler, USC
Completed 69.7 percent of his passes in the most efficient USC passing season ever.

BEST RUNNING QB
Vernon Adams, Oregon
Replacing Marcus Mariota is all but impossible but the FCS dual-threat sensation could ease the pain.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
D.J. Foster, Arizona State
Technically, he's more of a wide receiver these days, but Foster's speed and skill make big plays wherever he is.

BEST INSTINCTS
Scooby Wright, LB, Arizona
A nose for the ball combined with a relentless motor has made him one of the country's best defenders.

BEST ATHLETE
Myles Jack, RB/LB, UCLA
Give him the ball, or have him chase it—either way, the two-way star gets it done.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED (OFF THE FIELD)
Nelson Spruce, WR, Colorado
If the Fortune 500 had a draft board, the finance whiz would be on that, too.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Jared Goff, QB, Cal
Manages to stay poised and keep plays alive on a rebuilding team.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Myles Jack, RB/LB, UCLA
Near-certain first-round NFL Draft pick can play linebacker, safety or even running back as a pro.

TOP IMPACT FROSH
Josh Rosen, QB, UCLA
The poised, smart and strong-armed quarterback might grab the keys to the Bruins' high-powered offense right away as a true freshman.

HARDEST HITTER
Su'a Cravens, S/LB, USC
Versatile and fearsome, Cravens is a one-man wrecking crew at safety or linebacker.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Scooby Wright, LB, Arizona
Did @TwoStarScoob, as he calls himself on Twitter, make a huge leap to All-America status—or did the evaluators just whiff on him?

BEST INTERVIEW
Daniel Lasco, RB, Cal
Honest, insightful and down to earth, the Bears' leading rusher is their go-to guy behind the mic.

BEST COACH AS STRATEGIST
David Shaw, Stanford
Recruiting isn't the only reason the Cardinal keep playing at a consistently high level.

BEST COACH AS RECRUITER
Steve Sarkisian, USC
You don't need to step on a plane to recruit five-star talent at USC, but Sarkisian drives pretty fast, too.

HOTTEST SEAT
Mike MacIntyre, Colorado
The Buffs are making progress, but one Pac-12 win in two years just doesn't cut it.

BEST VENUE
Autzen Stadium, Oregon
Smart acoustics, rabid fans and a perennially dynamic team make for unforgettable moments along the Willamette River.

OREGON DUCKS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 4

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 1

Byron Marshall

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Eastern Washington	
S.12	@MICHIGAN STATE	46-27
S.19	Georgia State	
S.26	Utah	51-27
O.3	@COLORADO	44-10
O.10	Washington State	38-31
O.17	@WASHINGTON	45-20
O.29	@ARIZONA STATE	
N.7	California	59-41
N.14	@STANFORD	45-16
N.21	USC	
N.27	Oregon State	47-19

COACH

Mark Helfrich
Third year (24-4)
Career record: 24-4

Offensive coordinator: Scott Frost (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Don Pellum (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 13-2
(Lost to Ohio State in the College Football Playoff Championship Game, 42-20)
Stadium: Autzen Stadium (54,000)
Tickets: 800-WEB-FOOT
Site: Eugene, Ore.
Website: goducks.com
Twitter: @WinTheDay

For years now, that next-man-up mentality has served Oregon pretty well. Star running backs, quarterbacks and coaches alike take off, and the Ducks still manage to compete for Pac-12 and national titles. Every year.

But this is something else: After the Ducks made it to the first College Football Playoff title game last season, they lost the Heisman Trophy winner (Marcus Mariota), three other All-Americans (defensive back Ifo Ekpre-Olomu and offensive linemen Hroniss Grasu and Jake Fisher) along with NFL-bound Arik Armstead.

So what happens now? The Ducks can start by finding somebody who can at least try to replace what Mariota did. Thanks to some fortunate timing and the NCAA's grad-transfer route to collegiate free agency, they may have an immediate answer in FCS All-American Vernon Adams. An undersized but mobile quarterback with a strong arm, Adams didn't have a single FBS offer coming out of high school in southern California—so he instead put up crazy passing and rushing numbers for FCS power Eastern Washington. Then he rankled the Eagles after last season when he opted to graduate and spend his final season in Eugene.

No doubt Adams isn't going through all this to play a backup role. Leading the still-loaded Ducks will give him a much better chance to showcase himself for the NFL. But he'll have to quickly learn Oregon's system upon arrival this summer. If he isn't ready, the most likely

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Byron Marshall, WR

Versatility and superior athleticism aren't new to the Oregon football program, but Marshall takes things to another level. In 2013 he led the team in rushing (1,038 yards) and was the 20th Duck to reach 1,000 yards. Last year he contributed mostly as a receiver and caught 74 balls (31 more than any other Oregon receiver) for 1,003 yards. He considered the NFL but returns to help Oregon remain competitive while transitioning to Heisman-winning quarterback Marcus Mariota's successor.

MARSHALL: MARK J. TERRILL / AP

returner to get the job is Jeff Lockie, Mariota's backup last season. Lockie's old job meant he pretty much just ran the offense through some motions once the game was out of hand. But Lockie is a three-year veteran of the program who has the playbook down cold and has learned from Mariota's every move.

Whoever gets the job, however, may not have quite the protection that Mariota enjoyed. There are huge holes on the line after the losses of Grasu, Fisher and all-conference pick Hamani Stevens. While there is plenty of talent to replace them, and a leader in senior tackle Tyler Johnstone, inexperience could be an issue.

The big-play threats mostly remain. The Ducks have a potent one-two punch in running backs Royce Freeman and Thomas Tyner, while the receiving corps is loaded with size, talent and speed. Bralon Addison returns from a torn ACL to give more depth, too.

Defensively, the Ducks' biggest holes are in the secondary, where three starters departed: Ekpre-Olomu, Troy Hill and Erick Dargan. The potential replacements are young, though sophomore Chris Seisay gained some valuable experience playing in place of the injured Ekpre-Olomu during the CFP games.

Seniors Rodney Hardrick and Tyson Coleman lead a deep group of linebackers that includes several rotation players from last season, while the line remains especially strong after senior DeForest Buckner opted to return for his final season. The 290-pound Hawaiian, who sat out spring drills after arthroscopic knee surgery, has surprising athleticism that has already caught the attention of NFL scouts.

The Ducks don't plan to abandon their core 3-4 alignment but they may rush four defenders more often this season after sometimes dropping eight players back in coverage last year. That philosophy should be a good fit for linebacker Christian French, who led the Ducks in sacks (6.5) last season even though he didn't start a game.

BOTTOM LINE

If Oregon is ever going to drop back into that second tier of elite teams, this is the year it happens. But, even with the question at quarterback, there's just too much talent and experience around to envision the Ducks falling too far off the map. They just might have to stretch a little harder to stay near the top this time.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

The Ducks ranked No. 16 nationally (No. 3 in the Pac-12) per 247Sports and there are difference-makers throughout the class who are dripping with athleticism. Canton Kaumatule could play inside or outside on the defensive line or offensive tackle. Taj Griffin was one of the fastest high school running backs in the country and Oregon swiped him from the Atlanta area. Travis Jonsen is a perfect fit for the Ducks' offense. He's 6-4, has a good arm and can run with the best of them. Zach Okun is a future star at offensive guard.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Canton Kaumatule, DE ★★★★★
2. Taj Griffin, RB ★★★★
3. Travis Jonsen, QB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Jeff Lockie GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
10	148.9	21-28-0	75.0	207	1	20.7

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Royce Freeman	15	252	1365	5.4	18	91.0

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Byron Marshall	15	74	1003	13.6	6	66.9

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Reggie Daniels	15	62	21	83

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Christian French	15	6.5	49

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Tyson Coleman	1	0	0.0	0
Reggie Daniels	1	0	0.0	0
Danny Mattingly	1	0	0.0	0

MASCOT: RICK BOWMER / AP

BEHIND THE MASK

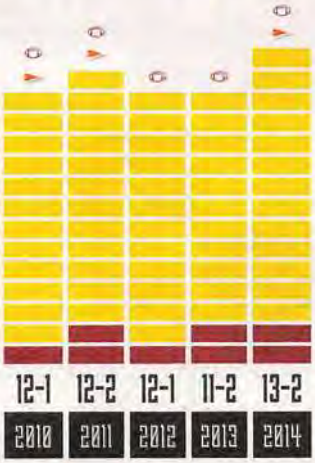
In 1940, drawings of Oregon's mascot began to resemble **Donald Duck**, so former athletic director Leo Harris met with Walt Disney and reached an informal handshake agreement granting Oregon permission to use Donald Duck as its mascot.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	OREGON	OPP
SCORING	681	354
Points Per Game	45.4	23.6
FIRST DOWNS	406	349
Rushing	183	132
Passing	198	189
Penalty	25	28
RUSHING YARDAGE	3518	2481
Yards gained rushing	3781	2905
Yards lost rushing	263	424
Rushing Attempts	644	587
Average Per Rush	5.5	4.2
Average Per Game	234.5	165.4
TDs Rushing	42	22
PASSING YARDAGE	4687	3964
Comp-Att-Int	326-474-4	351-581-13
Average Per Pass	9.9	6.8
Average Per Catch	14.4	11.3
Average Per Game	312.5	264.3
TDs Passing	44	21
TOTAL OFFENSE	8205	6445
Total Plays	1118	1168
Average Per Play	7.3	5.5
Average Per Game	547.0	429.7
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	45-886	93-1989
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	27-333	11-69
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	13-163	4-8
KICK RETURN AVG.	19.7	21.4
PUNT RETURN AVG.	12.3	6.3
INT RETURN AVG.	12.5	2.0
FUMBLES-LOST	18-7	30-21
PENALTIES-YARDS	123-1080	91-809
Average Per Game	72.0	53.9
PUNTS-YARDS	47-1840	68-2906
Average Per Punt	39.1	42.7
Net punt average	36.4	36.7
TIME OF POSS./GAME	26:49	33:11
3RD-DOWN CONV.	98/198	102/242
3rd-Down Pct.	49%	42%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	17/28	19/39
4th-Down Pct.	61%	49%
SACKS BY-YARDS	37-292	31-165
MISC YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	90	43
FG-ATTEMPTS	18-21	18-24
ATTENDANCE	401952	206341
Games/Avg Per Game	7/57422	4/51585
Neutral Site Games		4/69551

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Oregon	122	238	176	145	0	681
Opponent	77	98	86	93	0	354

5-YEAR RECORD 60-8



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Jeff Lockie (6-2, 205, Jr.)
	Vernon Adams (6-0, 190, Sr.)
RB	Royce Freeman (5-11 230, So.)
	Thomas Tyner (5-11, 215, Jr.)
LT	Tyler Johnstone (6-6, 295, Sr.)
	Stetzon Bair (6-9, 295, Sr.)
LG	Matt Pierson (6-6, 285, Sr.)
	Haniteli Lousi (6-5, 310, Sr.)
C	Jake Pisarcik (6-2, 300, So.)
	Doug Brenner (6-2, 305, So.)
RG	Cameron Hunt (6-4, 290, Jr.)
	Evan Voeller (6-5, 290, So.)
RT	Tyrell Crosby (6-5, 310, So.)
	Braden Eggert (6-6, 315, Fr.)
TE	Pharaoh Brown (6-6, 250, Sr.)
	Evan Baylis (6-6, 250, Jr.)
WR	Dwayne Stanford (6-5, 205, Jr.)
	Darren Carrington (6-2, 195, So.)
WR	Byron Marshall (5-10, 200, Sr.)
	Jalen Brown (6-1, 200, Fr.)
WR	Devon Allen (6-0, 185, So.)
	Bralon Addison (5-10, 190, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	DeForest Buckner (6-7, 290, Sr.)
	Henry Mondeaux (6-5, 290, So.)
NT	Alex Balducci (6-4, 310, Sr.)
	Austin Maloata (6-1, 300, So.)
DE	T.J. Daniel (6-6, 275, Jr.)
	Tui Talia (6-5, 285, Sr.)
OLB	Christian French (6-5, 250, Sr.)
	Justin Hollins (6-6, 230, So.)
ILB	Rodney Hardrick (6-1, 245, Sr.)
	Danny Mattingly (6-5, 245, So.)
ILB	Joe Walker (6-2, 240, Sr.)
	Jimmie Swain (6-2, 235, So.)
OLB	Tyson Coleman (6-1, 235, Sr.)
	Torrodney Prevot (6-3, 220, Jr.)
CB	Charles Nelson (5-8, 170, So.)
	Arrion Springs (5-11, 205, So.)
CB	Chris Seisay (6-1, 190, So.)
	Ugo Amadi (5-10, 185, Fr.)
FS	Reggie Daniels (6-1, 205, Jr.)
	Khalil Oliver (6-0, 200, Fr.)
SS	Tyree Robinson (6-4, 205, So.)
	Juwaan Williams (6-0, 190, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Aidan Schneider (6-4, 235, So.)
P	Ian Wheeler (6-0, 205, So.)

Sporting News All-American

STANFORD
CARDINAL

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 24

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 2

Blake Martinez

MARTINEZ: RICK SCUTERI / AP

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@NORTHWESTERN	
S.12	UCF	
S.19	@USC	10-13
S.25	@OREGON STATE	38-14
O.3	Arizona	
O.15	UCLA	31-10
O.24	Washington	20-13
O.31	@WASHINGTON STATE	34-17
N.7	@COLORADO	
N.14	Oregon	16-45
N.21	California	38-17
N.28	Notre Dame	14-17

COACH
David Shaw
Fifth year (42-12)
Career record: 42-12

Offensive coordinator:
Mike Bloomgren (third year)
Defensive coordinator:
Lance Anderson (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Maryland in the Foster Farms Bowl, 45-21)
Stadium: Stanford Stadium (50,424)
Tickets: 800-STANFORD
Site: Palo Alto, Calif.
Website: gostanford.com
Twitter: @StanfordFball

It wasn't all that long ago that five losses and a minor bowl appearance would have been a reason to celebrate on The Farm. But four straight BCS bowls have spoiled Stanford fans so much that when the Cardinal blew out Maryland in the Foster Farms Bowl just 11 miles away from campus in Levi's Stadium, the place was barely half full.

The question now is whether Stanford has enough to get back to the elite standard that current coach David Shaw and predecessor Jim Harbaugh have set. Offensively, the return of quarterback Kevin Hogan and 10 other starters should allow the Cardinal to improve the complex, but often static, offense that dragged through the first two-thirds of last season. But the defense will require another leap of faith. While Stanford has managed to perennially plug holes on defense capably, this year's team returns only four starters–and potentially three if safety Zach Hoffpauir opts to leave for professional baseball.

Worse, because of injuries, the Cardinal had trouble establishing the new look defensively in the spring. Inside linebacker Blake Martinez was the only returning starter practicing at one point. But Martinez is at least a good place to start: Having steadily improved throughout his career, Martinez became the Cardinal's leading tackler last season (102) in the middle of a defense that lost three starting linemen and eight starters overall. Among those gone are all-conference safety Jordan Richards, cornerback Alex Carter (left early for the NFL) and Wayne Lyons (transferred to Michigan).

But Shaw says he's impressed with the talent his team has defensively and, somehow, Stanford always manages a pretty high standard there. After all, it had to figure out what to do without linebackers Trent Murphy and Shayne Skov and other key players last season–yet mostly throttled

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Blake Martinez, LB

Martinez saw meaningful action for the first time as a junior in 2014, but two years of earning his time and working his way up the depth chart paid off. The 6-2, 247-pound senior led Stanford in tackles last year (102) and showed an impressive combination of speed, strength and instincts with seven tackles for loss, 4.5 sacks, four QB hurries, two forced fumbles and a team-leading three interceptions.

opponents by holding them to just 16.4 points a game. The Cardinal's rushing defense (104.5 average yards allowed per game) was particularly stiff.

But inexperience at cornerback and a thin defensive line—which has little experience other than Aziz Shittu and Cal graduate transfer Brennan Scarlett—could make for some anxious moments. Kodi Whitfield and Dallas Lloyd hold promise at safety, even if Hoffpauir leaves for baseball, while Stanford needs to stretch its corners to be able to rotate into nickel packages when needed.

Offensively, the Cardinal was shakier until it managed to average 38 points during its final three games of last season. The leadership of Hogan and continuity throughout should help Stanford pick up where it left off at Levi's Stadium.

Instead of relying on one workhorse running back, the Cardinal is likely to go for the second straight year with more of a committee approach, returning leading rusher Remound Wright and Barry Sanders Jr., while the versatile Christian McCaffrey adds another element. The son of former Stanford and NFL receiver Ed McCaffrey, Christian could also line up as a wide receiver and return kicks or punts, too.

The only question at quarterback entering the fall is whether highly touted sophomore Keller Chryst, the son of San Francisco 49ers offensive coordinator Geep Chryst, can beat out junior Ryan Burns for the backup spot.

Stanford also returns talented receivers Devon Cajuste and Michael Rector, and a strong crew of tight ends led by Austin Hooper.

On the line, Stanford shifted Kyle Murphy over from right to left tackle to make up for the loss of blind-side blocker Andrus Peat, who left for the NFL. It's just a matter of whether Casey Tucker or Nick Davidson plugs in for Murphy.

Stanford lost both kicker Jordan Williamson and punter Ben Rhyne, but Conrad Ukropina, the Cardinal's kickoff man in 2013, is expected to handle both this year.

BOTTOM LINE

There's enough returning talent and the track record under Shaw that suggests Stanford won't lose five games this time. But after injuries limited the Cardinal's development severely in the spring, they'll have to figure it out quickly in the fall—and be ready for two conference road games in September, the first at USC.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

This Stanford class finished No. 24 nationally, according to 247Sports. Irwin has excellent hands, size and speed and should see the field early in his Cardinal career. Frank Buncom IV is a bigger corner who could also play safety, while Bryce Love is a track/speed guy. The strength of the class is in the secondary, where Ben Edwards (out of Florida) and Justin Reid (Louisiana) are the big out-of-state gets. Quenton Meeks is a 6-2, 195-pound corner from California who fits in with the rest of the group, which as a whole has elite potential.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Trent Irwin, WR ★★★★
2. Frank Buncom IV, CB ★★★★
3. Bryce Love, RB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Kevin Hogan	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	13	145.8	232-352-8	65.9	2792	19	214.8

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Remound Wright	12	135	601	4.5	11	50.1

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Austin Hooper	13	40	499	12.5	2	38.4

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Blake Martinez	13	53	49	102

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Peter Kalambayi	13	6.5	61

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Blake Martinez	3	2	0.7	0

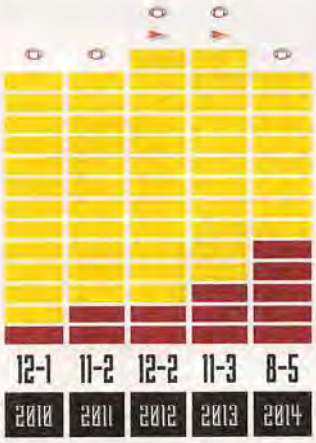
BEHIND THE MASK
The Tree is a member of the Stanford band and is representative of El Palo Alto, the Redwood tree that still stands by the railroad bridge in East Palo Alto beside San Francisquito Creek near the Stanford campus.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	STANFORD	OPP
SCORING	353	213
Points Per Game	27.2	16.4
FIRST DOWNS	266	219
Rushing	95	84
Passing	149	117
Penalty	22	18
RUSHING YARDAGE	2064	1358
Yards gained rushing	2325	1812
Yards lost rushing	261	454
Rushing Attempts	477	443
Average Per Rush	4.3	3.1
Average Per Game	158.8	104.5
TDs Rushing	22	12
PASSING YARDAGE	2988	2313
Comp-Att-Int	248-381-8	245-430-12
Average Per Pass	7.8	5.4
Average Per Catch	12.0	9.4
Average Per Game	229.8	177.9
TDs Passing	20	12
TOTAL OFFENSE	5052	3671
Total Plays	858	873
Average Per Play	5.9	4.2
Average Per Game	388.6	282.4
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	29-651	25-529
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	22-403	23-159
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-68	8-33
KICK RETURN AVG.	22.4	21.2
PUNT RETURN AVG.	18.3	6.9
INT RETURN AVG.	5.7	4.1
FUMBLES-LOST	28-13	14-4
PENALTIES-YARDS	75-630	81-699
Average Per Game	48.5	53.8
PUNTS-YARDS	59-2252	82-3437
Average Per Punt	38.2	41.9
Net punt average	33.8	35.0
TIME OF POSS./GAME	32:13	27:47
3RD-DOWN CONV.	70/165	72/201
3rd-Down Pct.	42%	36%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	3/10	12/27
4th-Down Pct.	30%	44%
SACKS BY-YARDS	46-338	23-154
MISC YARDS	39	0
TDS SCORED	44	26
FG-ATTEMPTS	15-22	11-14
ATTENDANCE	287174	392254
Games/Avg Per Game	6/47862	6/65376
Neutral Site Games		1/34780

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Stanford	92	128	48	75	10	353
Opponent	42	68	19	71	13	213

5-YEAR RECORD 54-13



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Kevin Hogan (6-4, 225, Sr.)
	Keller Chryst (6-5, 231, So.)
FB	Daniel Marx (6-2, 247, So.)
RB	Christian McCaffrey (6-0, 197, So.)
	Barry Sanders Jr. (5-10, 198, Sr.)
LT	Kyle Murphy (6-7, 298, Sr.)
	David Bright (6-5, 295, Jr.)
LG	Joshua Garnett (6-5, 325, Sr.)
	Brendon Austin (6-6, 296, Sr.)
C	Graham Shuler (6-4, 287, Sr.)
	Johnny Caspers (6-4, 297, Sr.)
RG	Johnny Caspers (6-4, 297, Sr.)
	David Bright (6-5, 295, Jr.)
RT	Casey Tucker (6-6, 305, So.)
	Nick Davidson (6-7, 288, Sr.)
TE	Austin Hooper (6-4, 249, Jr.)
	Eric Cotton (6-6, 239, Jr.)
WR	Michael Rector (6-1, 185, Sr.)
	Rollins Stallworth (6-4, 210, Sr.)
WR	Devon Cajuste (6-4, 229 , Sr.)
	Francis Owusu (6-3, 215, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Aziz Shittu (6-3, 275, Sr.)
	Jordan Watkins (6-2, 262, Sr.)
DT	Nate Lohn (6-3, 265, Sr.)
	Solomon Thomas (6-3, 256, So.)
DE	Harrison Phillips (6-4, 255, So.)
	Brennan Scarlett (6-4, 260, Sr.)
OLB	Peter Kalambayi (6-3, 245, Jr.)
	Joey Alfieri (6-3, 228 , So.)
ILB	Noor Davis (6-4, 243, Sr.)
	Craig Jones (6-0, 221, Sr.)
ILB	Blake Martinez (6-2, 247, Sr.)
	Kevin Palma (6-2, 253, Jr.)
OLB	Kevin Anderson (6-4, 245, Sr.)
	Mike Tyler (6-5, 230, Jr.)
CB	Ronnie Harris (5-10, 173, Sr.)
	Alija Holder (6-2, 174, So.)
CB	Terrence Alexander (5-10, 178, So.)
	Alameen Murphy (5-11, 185, So.)
FS	Zach Hoffpauir (6-0, 197, Sr.)
	Brandon Simmons (6-0, 182, So.)
SS	Kodi Whitfield (6-2, 204, Sr.)
	Dallas Lloyd (6-3, 213, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Conrad Ukropina (6-1, 189, Sr.)
P	Conrad Ukropina (6-1, 189, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

MASCOT: WILY LOW / AP

WASHINGTON
HUSKIES

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **3**

Jaydon Mickens

Chris Petersen is entering his second year coaching the Huskies, but if it feels like his first, you'll have to forgive him. The offensive line is new. The defensive line is new. And there was a key quarterback missing, again, in the spring.

Oh, well. Cyler Miles, the guy who wound up starting at QB last season after he was suspended for 2014 spring drills, missed this spring and could be out all season for unspecified personal reasons. So the Huskies moved on with a three-man race at quarterback, where the front-runner is Jeff Lindquist, a solid running threat who served as Miles' backup last season. Two newcomers are also getting a look: redshirt freshman K.J. Carta-Samuels, a strong passer and runner, along with true freshman Jake Browning.

Whoever the quarterback is might need some patience. The offensive line will have to replace three starters, though three-year regular Dexter Charles is back at left guard.

There isn't a whole lot of depth at receiver behind veteran Jaydon Mickens, who caught 60 passes last season, but the electric John Ross returns to wideout after the secondary borrowed him out of necessity late last season. Running back is in good shape with Dwayne Washington, Deontae Cooper and Lavon Coleman. Washington has great speed for his size, while Cooper shook off old knee issues to average 20.4 yards a game last season.

Good defense up front helped keep Washington afloat in the Pac-12 North last season, with the Huskies second in the league in rushing defense (124.0 yards allowed per game), second in sacks (3.7 per game) and third in scoring defense (24.8 points allowed per game). But there are no guarantees this time: Washington lost linebacker Shaq Thompson to the NFL, and four more of the front-seven starters are gone. Washington is migrating away from a 4-3 to more of a 3-4, trying to keep pressure on from different angles. There's intrigue in 329-pound nose tackle Vita Vea, if he can stay in shape.

If things don't get much better in the secondary, which allowed 286.6 passing yards per game in 2014, it might be tempting to press Ross back into duty. But one-time Oregon commit Budda Baker became a Freshman All-America pick last season at safety.

BOTTOM LINE

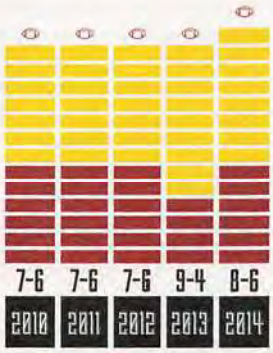
There may not be much star power emerging but the Huskies have enough talent and depth to stay around .500 in conference play. Any big improvement is still down the road.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Jaydon Mickens, WR

It's hard to predict the performance of a receiver without a dependable quarterback. At the same time the best estimate for solid quarterback play is a dependable target, and Jaydon Mickens is that. In three years he has totaled 145 receptions, with back-to-back seasons of at least 60. The 5-11 playmaker's best game last season came in a 31-7 conference win over Cal when he had 10 catches for 69 yards.

5-YEAR RECORD 38-28



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Jeff Lindquist (6-3, 244, Jr.)
RB	Dwayne Washington (6-2, 221, Jr.)
LT	Jake Eldrenkamp (6-5, 298, Jr.)
LG	Dexter Charles (6-5, 312, Sr.)
C	Siosifa Tufunga (6-3, 313, Sr.)
RG	Shane Brostek (6-4, 301, Jr.)
RT	Coleman Shelton (6-4, 282, So.)
TE	Joshua Perkins (6-4, 226, Sr.)
WR	Jaydon Mickens (5-11, 171, Sr.)
WR	Dante Pettis (6-0, 183, So.)
WR	Brayden Lenius (6-5, 217, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Will Dissly (6-4, 275, So.)
NT	Vita Vea (6-5, 329, Fr.)
DT	Elijah Qualls (6-1, 305, So.)
OLB	Cory Littleton (6-3, 227, Sr.)
ILB	Scott Lawyer (6-2, 230, Sr.)
ILB	Keishawn Bierria (6-1, 223, So.)
OLB	Travis Feeney (6-4, 223, Sr.)
CB	Darren Gardenhire (5-11, 181, So.)
CB	Sidney Jones (6-0, 177, So.)
FS	Budda Baker (5-10, 176, So.)
SS	Ezekiel Turner (6-2, 204, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Cameron Van Winkle (5-10, 181, Jr.)
P	Korey Durkee (6-4, 247, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1. **Jake Browning,** QB ★★★★
2. **Benning Potoae,** DE ★★★★
3. **Austin Joyner,** CB ★★★★

In addition to Jake Browning, who will develop into an outstanding quarterback, Benning Potoae and speedy Austin Joyner, the Huskies landed two high-upside, in-state offensive tackles in Henry Roberts and Trey Adams. The pair could be bookends for UW in the years to come and have high-end talent. Chico McClatcher is another in-state playmaker at running back/slot who can make a tackler miss in a phone booth. The Huskies ended up signing six of the top eight prospects from the state of Washington in 2015.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	@BOISE STATE	
S.12	Sacramento State	
S.19	Utah State	
S.26	California	31-7
O.8	@USC	
O.17	Oregon	20-45
O.24	@STANFORD	13-20
O.31	Arizona	26-27
N.7	Utah	
N.14	@ARIZONA STATE	10-24
N.21	@OREGON STATE	37-13
N.27	Washington State	31-13

COACH

Chris Petersen
Second year (8-6)
Career record: 100-18

Offensive coordinator: Jonathan Smith (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Pete Kwiatkowski (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-6
(Lost to Oklahoma State in the Cactus Bowl, 30-22)
Stadium: Husky Stadium (70,138)
Tickets: 206-543-2200
Site: Seattle
Website: gohuskies.com
Twitter: @UW_Football

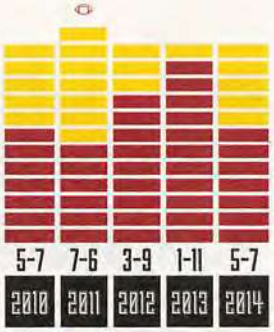
PAC-12 North

MICKENS: ELAINE THOMPSON / AP

CALIFORNIA
GOLDEN BEARS

PAC-12 North

5-YEAR RECORD 21-40



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Jared Goff (6-4, 210, Jr.)
RB Daniel Lasco (6-0, 210, Sr.)
LT Steven Moore (6-6, 305, Jr.)
LG Chris Borrayo (6-3, 305, Jr.)
C Matt Cochran (6-3, 295, Jr.)
RG Jordan Rigsbee (6-4, 300, Sr.)
RT Brian Farley (6-7, 280, Sr.)
WR Kenny Lawler (6-3, 195, Jr.)
WR Bryce Treggs (5-11, 185, Sr.)
WR Stephen Anderson (6-3, 220, Sr.)
WR Trevor Davis (6-2, 180, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Kyle Kragen (6-2, 245, Sr.)
DT Mustafa Jalil (6-3, 300, Sr.)
DT James Looney (6-3, 285, So.)
DE Puka Lopa (6-2, 260, Sr.)
LB Jake Kearney (6-3, 220, Jr.)
LB Hardy Nickerson (6-0, 225, Jr.)
LB Michael Barton (6-0, 230, Jr.)
CB Darius Allensworth (5-11, 190, So.)
CB Darius White (6-1, 180, Sr.)
S Griffin Piatt (6-3, 200, Jr.)
S Stefan McClure (5-11, 200, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Matt Anderson (5-11, 185, So.)
P Cole Leininger (6-1, 200, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Carlos Strickland,** WR ★★★★
2. **Jaylinn Hawkins,** WR ★★★★
3. **Semisi Uluave,** OG ★★★★

This is an excellent class at wide receiver, with Carlos Strickland and 6-5, 205-pound Cal legacy Austin Aaron featured as plus-sized targets. Jaylinn Hawkins is a gamebreaker. Ross Bowers (Bothell, Wash.) has a bright future as a quarterback in Cal's offensive scheme. Malik Psalms is a 6-1 cornerback who is a bit underrated. Juco defensive end DeVante Wilson signed with USC out of Corona (Calif.) High before heading to Riverside (Calif.) Community College.

Kenny Lawler

LAWLER: ERIC RISBERG / AP

Pretty much since he first stepped into Memorial Stadium, quarterback Jared Goff has been setting records. And, really, he's had to. The Bears didn't win five games last season because they shut people down, but because Goff made enough plays with a talented group of receivers and running backs to get some separation from a woeful first year under coach Sonny Dykes in 2013.

With Cal still trying to fix the worst scoring defense (39.8 points per game) and total defense (511.8 yards per game) in the Pac-12–and Goff returning with most of his favorite targets–more of the same may be in order this season.

After breaking 15 mostly single-season records last year–including passing yards (3,973), touchdowns responsible for (35) and consecutive passes without an interception (185)–Goff can go after some career records this time. His 7,481 passing yards, 53 passing touchdowns and 7,375 yards of total offense enter the season already third in Cal history.

He has plenty of proven capable receiving targets, including wideouts Bryce Treggs and the big-handed Kenny Lawler as well as veteran tight end Stephen Anderson (66.1 receiving yards per game).

At running back, Cal is similarly strong. Versatile Daniel Lasco is the starter but bruising sophomore Vic Enwere kept up his late-season improvement into the spring and is likely to take a much bigger role this time.

On the line, Cal returns three starters, and will likely move Jordan Rigsbee to guard while putting Matt Cochran at center.

Defensively, not only were things bad, but there was also this: End Brennan Scarlett opted to leave via grad-transfer free agency to ... Stanford of all places. The Bears will try to build around tackle Mustafa "Moose" Jalil on the line, while Kyle Kragen returns at end after missing last season with mononucleosis. While Cal's linebackers are stable, spring injuries and a flood of newcomers are making the secondary uncertain. But there's more talent overall and, besides, things can't get much worse.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Kenny Lawler, WR

Lawler has had some impressive plays over the past two seasons, most notably a couple of highlight-reel, one-handed touchdown grabs. More importantly, he's Cal's most productive wideout and the greatest contributor to quarterback Jared Goff's 3,973 passing yards and 35 touchdowns last year. Lawler reeled in 54 catches for 701 yards and nine TDs in '14, and he'll look to increase that for a Cal team with much room for improvement.

BOTTOM LINE

Even if the Bears manage some improvement defensively, a brutal road schedule could mean getting bowl-eligible will be a major challenge. But at least Cal should be fun to watch when it has the ball.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

4

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Grambling State	
S.12	San Diego State	
S.19	@TEXAS	
S.26	@WASHINGTON	7-31
O.3	Washington State	60-59
O.10	@UTAH	
O.22	@UCLA	34-36
O.31	USC	30-38
N.7	@OREGON	41-59
N.14	Oregon State	45-31
N.21	@STANFORD	17-38
N.28	Arizona State	

COACH

Sonny Dykes
Third year (6-18)
Career record: 28-33
Offensive coordinator: Tony Franklin (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Art Kaufman (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 5-7
Stadium: California Memorial Stadium (62,467)
Tickets: 800-GO-BEARS
Site: Berkeley, Calif.
Website: calbears.com
Twitter: @CalFootball

OREGON STATE

BEAVERS

PAC-12 North

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **5**

Victor Bolden

The buzz around Pacific Northwest college football actually shifted a bit north of Eugene in the offseason.

Not once, but twice.

First, longtime OSU coach Mike Riley, all but a Corvallis lifer, took off for Nebraska. Then Wisconsin coach Gary Andersen, coming off a blowout loss to Ohio State in the Big Ten Championship Game, left Madison and the shadow of athletic director Barry Alvarez for Corvallis after just two seasons with the Badgers.

The move meant a big shift in philosophy from Riley's pro-style system to a spread offense under Andersen, but it created some interest and optimism after the generally well-liked Riley began to face a perception that his program had stalled in recent years.

The problem is that the Beavers may move backward initially under Andersen. With Sean Mannion gone and Luke Del Rio deciding to transfer in the spring, the Beavers have no quarterbacks with game experience and are decimated defensively at linebacker and in the secondary.

Del Rio's pro-style skills didn't appear to be a great fit in Andersen's spread offense, so the Beavers carried a wide-open competition into the fall with Seth Collins and Nick Mitchell the early leaders. Both are good fits for Andersen's offense; Mitchell impressed when asked to "become" opposing dual-threat guys on the scout team last season, while Collins is extremely athletic with some questions about his throwing accuracy.

The good news about the transition is that Andersen's offense is less complex than Riley's, which excelled when things went right but went awry if the execution wasn't there.

On defense, the Beavers are expected to go more often with a 3-4 than Riley's 4-3, hoping to get more speed on the field. The Beavers may also go with some 3-3-5 coverage. Other than dependable corner Larry Scott, though, the secondary lacks experience.

BOTTOM LINE

This is a transition year in more ways than one: new coach, new players, new alignments, new philosophies. But it also brings the Beavers new hope of a higher ceiling. They just can't get there anytime soon.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Victor Bolden, WR

Seven Oregon State receivers had at least 20 receptions in 2014, with four of them going over 300 in yardage. But none were as productive as Bolden, who had a breakout sophomore campaign with 72 receptions and 798 yards. The Beavers are moving on from quarterback Sean Mannion, who holds virtually every school passing record. Having caught 38 more passes than any other teammate in 2014, Bolden will be the go-to guy for new quarterback Seth Collins.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	Weber State	
S.12	@MICHIGAN	
S.19	San Jose State	
S.25	Stanford	14-38
O.10	@ARIZONA	
O.17	@WASHINGTON STATE	32-39
O.24	Colorado	36-31
O.31	@UTAH	23-29
N.7	UCLA	
N.14	@CALIFORNIA	31-45
N.21	Washington	13-37
N.27	@OREGON	19-47

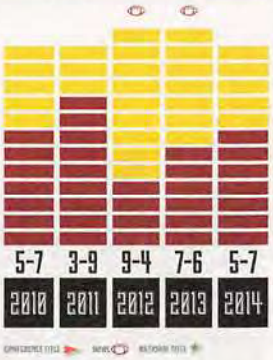
COACH

Gary Andersen
First year
Career record: 50-38
Offensive coordinator: Dave Baldwin (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Kalani Sitake (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 5-7
Stadium: Reser Stadium (45,674)
Tickets: 1-800-GO-BEAVS
Site: Corvallis, Ore.
Website: osubeavers.com
Twitter: @OSUBeaversFB

5-YEAR RECORD 29-33



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Seth Collins (6-3, 186, Fr.)
RB	Storm Woods (6-0, 203, Sr.)
LT	Sean Harlow (6-4, 298, Jr.)
LG	Fred Lauina (6-4, 315, So.)
C	Josh Mitchell (6-3, 306, Sr.)
RG	Gavin Andrews (6-6, 343, Sr.)
RT	Isaac Seumalo (6-5, 310, Jr.)
TE	Caleb Smith (6-6, 263, Sr.)
WR	Richard Mullaney (6-3, 209, Sr.)
WR	Hunter Jarmon (5-11, 198, So.)
WR	Victor Bolden (5-9, 172, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jaswha James (6-2, 264, Sr.)
NT	Kyle Peko (6-1, 306, Sr.)
DT	Jalen Grimble (6-2, 291, Sr.)
OLB	Kyle Haley (6-0, 217, Jr.)
ILB	Caleb Saulo (6-1, 232, Jr.)
ILB	Rommel Mageo (6-2, 232, Jr.)
OLB	Darrell Songy (6-0, 223, So.)
CB	Dwayne Williams (5-9, 176, Fr.)
CB	Larry Scott (5-11, 192, Sr.)
FS	Cyril Noland-Lewis (6-1, 206, Jr.)
SS	Justin Strong (5-9, 195, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Garrett Owens (5-9, 181, So.)
P	Nick Porebski (5-10, 190, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1. **Christian Folau,** ILB ★★★
2. **Paul Lucas,** RB ★★★
3. **Noah Togiai,** TE ★★★

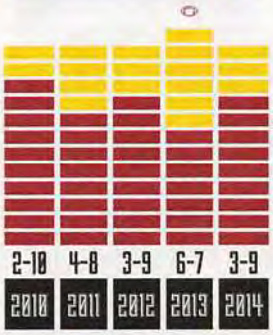
New coach Gary Andersen's first class saw him dip into familiar territory. The former Utah State head coach, who spent two seasons at Wisconsin, signed four players from the state of Utah, including Christian Folau and Noah Togiai. Lucas was a track star in the state of Arizona, but is not just fast—he's an excellent football player and could help Oregon State right away. If cornerback Treston Decoud makes it in academically, he's a 6-3, 205-pound monster defensive back who could make an instant impact.

BOLDEN: TONY AVELAR/AP

WASHINGTON STATE COUGARS

PAC-12 North

5-YEAR RECORD 18-43



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Luke Falk (6-4, 208, So.)
RB Jamal Morrow (5-8, 187, So.)
LT Joe Dahl (6-4, 303, Sr.)
LG Gunnar Eklund (6-7, 305, Sr.)
C Riley Sorenson (6-4, 321, Jr.)
RG Eduardo Middleton (6-5, 318, Jr.)
RT Cole Madison (6-5, 300, So.)
WR Dom Williams (6-2, 190, Sr.)
WR Robert Lewis (5-9, 162, So.)
WR River Cracraft (6-0, 200, Jr.)
WR Gabe Marks (6-0, 181, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Destiny Vaeao (6-4, 295, Sr.)
NT Daniel Ekuale (6-3, 281, So.)
DE Darryl Paulo (6-2, 261, Sr.)
OLB Kache Palacio (6-2, 227, Sr.)
MLB Peyton Pelluer (6-0, 224, So.)
WLB Jeremiah Allison (6-2, 224, Sr.)
CB Charleston White (5-10, 176, So.)
CB Marcellus Pippins (5-10, 163, So.)
NB Darius Lemora (5-11, 182, So.)
FS Isaac Dotson (6-1, 218, So.)
SS Taylor Taliulu (5-11, 206, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Quentin Breshears (6-0, 183, Sr.)
P Matt Abramo (6-2, 170, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Thomas Toki,** DT ★★★★
2. **Shalom Luani,** S ★★★
3. **Kameron Powell,** S ★★★

Shalom Luani, Kameron Powell and Louisiana product Hunter Dale combine to form one of the better safety classes in the Pac-12. Toki is 5-11 and 308 pounds and may not pass the eyeball test, but his film is outstanding and he should contribute early. The Cougars also signed quarterback Tyler Hilinski of Upland, Calif., one of 16 signees from the state. He is 6-3 and has a good arm but just needs more consistency.

River Cracraft

CRACRAFT: DEAN HARE / AP

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **6**

The Mike Leach Experiment is entering its fourth year at Washington State, and there's still no telling which way it's going to go. A proven winner who brought some baggage from Texas Tech, Leach took over a program in shambles in 2012, put the Cougs in a bowl game in 2013 ... and then watched things head in reverse somewhat last season.

So there's plenty to keep fixing. Wazzu must replace a quarterback and two key receivers from its pass-happy "Air Raid" offense, and Leach made drastic staff moves to help a porous defense and disastrous special teams.

Leach fired special-teams coach Eric Russell in midseason after the Cougs missed a 19-yard would-be game-winner and gave up two kickoff returns for touchdowns in a 60-59 loss to Cal. Then, after the season, he brought in Missouri's safeties coach, 34-year-old Alex Grinch, as defensive coordinator.

Leach has praised the high-energy Grinch for his emphasis on teaching, and Grinch has a lot of it to do. The Cougars gave up 38.6 points a game on average last season and were last in turnover margin in the Pac-12, taking away the ball only eight times all season with just three interceptions. Junior-college transfer Jeremiah Mitchell joins honorable mention All-Pac-12 pick Jeremiah Allison at linebacker, while last season's sack leader, Kache Palacio, will play a rush end/linebacker spot in the 3-4 or 3-3-5.

The secondary has the biggest questions, especially after leading tackler Daquawn Brown was dismissed from the team.

Offensively, Gabe Marks returns from an injury-redshirt season after catching 74 passes in 2013. He'll help replace top receivers Vince Mayle and Isiah Myers while there's a battle between Luke Falk and Peyton Bender to replace departed Connor Halliday at quarterback. Falk has an edge in experience, having thrown for 471 yards and five TDs in a start against Oregon State last season, while Bender may have more big-play potential. The offensive line returns all five starters.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

River Cracraft, WR

River Clyde Cracraft, named for his grandfather, Clyde, who was born and raised in Scotland near the River Clyde, is the top holdover from a WSU receiving corps that kept touchdowns flowing last year with a combined 45 spread among seven players. The 6-0, 200-pound junior contributed eight touchdowns and 66 receptions, which was only third on the team last year. He gives QB Luke Falk a dependable and productive target on the outside.

BOTTOM LINE

With his staff and philosophy, Leach continues to take some major gambles. But at Washington State, maybe that's the best way to go. Eleven straight seasons without a winning record says it's never going to be easy.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Portland State	59-21
S.12	@RUTGERS	38-41
S.19	Wyoming	
O.3	@CALIFORNIA	59-60
O.10	@OREGON	31-38
O.17	Oregon State	39-32
O.24	@ARIZONA	37-59
O.31	Stanford	17-34
N.7	Arizona State	31-52
N.14	@UCLA	
N.21	Colorado	
N.27	@WASHINGTON	13-31

COACH

Mike Leach
Fourth year (12-25)
Career record: 96-68

Offensive coordinator: Mike Leach (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator: Alex Grinch (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: Martin Stadium (32,952)
Tickets: 800-GO-COUGS
Site: Pullman, Wash.
Website: wsucougars.com
Twitter: @WSUCougFB

USC TROJANS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 6

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 1

Su'a Cravens

Nine wins doesn't cut it at USC, and nobody knows it better than Steve Sarkisian.

Returning to campus for a fifth time last year–as head coach on this occasion–Sarkisian embraced the expectations right away, saying it's about winning championships, not games. But even winning games was a problem last season, with USC twice losing on its opponent's final play–including Arizona State's Hail Mary–and being outscored 86-72 in the fourth quarter. That fade may be partly to blame on the fact that the Trojans were not only adjusting to Sarkisian's system, but were also saddled with injuries and NCAA sanctions that never left them with more than 57 scholarship players in uniform at any one time.

Those excuses are gone now. Sure, the Trojans have to find a way to replace all-everything defensive end Leonard Williams, wide receiver Nelson Agholor and all-conference rusher Javorius Allen, but that's the kind of problem USC teams used to deal with every year. And thrive in spite of it.

The return of 16 starters and an incoming recruiting class generally ranked either No. 1 or No. 2 says the Trojans should move back toward sustainable success, like annual double-digit wins and being in the hunt for championships.

The optimism starts at quarterback, where Cody Kessler returns after the most efficient passing season in USC history, having shown off an impressive combination of passing ability, mobility and vision. Kessler is aiming to scramble more this season and avoid sacks, too. His backup, Max Browne, isn't much of drop-off in talent, either.

What's more, the entire starting line is back, anchored by All-America candidate Max Tuerk at center along with a pair of impressive freshmen last season, guard/tackle Toa Lobendahn and guard Viane Talamaivao.

At wide receiver, JuJu Smith didn't waste

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Su'a Cravens, LB/S

It's rare that a defensive player gets billing over a quarterback, particularly a quarterback like Heisman hopeful Cody Kessler who threw 39 touchdown passes last year. But Su'a Cravens, one of four USC 2014 all-conference first-teamers, was arguably as productive on the other side of the ball as Kessler. Cravens went berserk with 68 tackles, a team leading 17 tackles for loss, five sacks, nine pass breakups and three interceptions with one returned for a touchdown.

CRAVENS: RICK SCUTERI / AP

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Arkansas State	
S.12	Idaho	
S.19	Stanford	13-10
S.26	@ARIZONA STATE	34-38
O.8	Washington	
O.17	@NOTRE DAME	49-14
O.24	Utah	21-24
O.31	@CALIFORNIA	38-30
N.7	Arizona	28-26
N.13	@COLORADO	56-28
N.21	@OREGON	
N.28	UCLA	20-38

COACH

Steve Sarkisian
Second year (9-4)
Career record: 44-33

Offensive coordinator: Clay Helton (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Justin Wilcox (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 9-4
(Beat Nebraska in the Holiday Bowl, 45-42)
Stadium: Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum (93,607)
Tickets: 213-740-GOSC
Site: Los Angeles
Website: usctrojans.com
Twitter: @USC_Athletics

any time branding himself as a potential future star last season. He had 123 receiving yards in his first game against Fresno State, a record for a USC freshman debut. He finished with 54 receptions for 724 yards. Then there's Adoree' Jackson, arguably the Trojans' most eye-opening attraction: He can pop up and make an impact at wide receiver or defensive back, where he was the Pac-12 Defensive Freshman of the Year last season—and he's a track standout, too. The Trojans return experience in Darreus Rogers and Steven Mitchell at receiver, while juco transfer Isaac Whitney has the kind of size and speed that should put him in the rotation immediately.

Tight end is a little more muddled. While Bryce Dixon entered the summer with an unresolved student-conduct issue, Jalen Cope-Fitzpatrick was academically ineligible last year. Freshman Tyler Petite could grab the spot right away, but walk-on Connor Spears impressed in the spring after a redshirt season following his transfer from Columbia. University of Oklahoma grad transfer Taylor McNamara is another option.

While it won't be possible to replace Williams' looming specter on defense, the Trojans could be better overall as a unit. If nothing else, they know how to react better within the hybrid defense of second-year coordinator Justin Wilcox, having a capable trio returning on the line in Claude Pelon, Delvon Simmons and nose tackle Antwaun Woods.

Jackson, when at cornerback, and outside linebacker Su'a Cravens could be the Trojans' most electric defenders. The only question is how much durability Jackson can have, being valuable at receiver, corner and as a returner. Returning starter Kevon Seymour also showed more promise at corner during the spring despite playing with a banged-up shoulder.

USC lost steady placekicker Andre Heidari but has punter Kris Albarado back after an improved junior season.

BOTTOM LINE

The Trojans' improved depth and talent will help in the close ones this time. But expecting a Pac-12 title or CFP berth may be too much to ask with a tough schedule that concludes against UCLA.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

1. Iman Marshall, CB ★★★★★
2. Rasheem Green, DT ★★★★★
3. Chuma Edoga, OT ★★★★★

The Trojans were .56 points away from topping Alabama for the No. 1 class in 2015 and it's quite a group. Nobody signed a better group of linebackers as John Houston, Porter Gustin, Osa Masina and Cameron Smith—all of them can flat-out play. Ricky Town and Sam Darnold are coming in at quarterback. Running back Ronald Jones II is one of the more explosive backs in the class. The Trojans landed him down the stretch after he backed out of a commitment to Oklahoma State. Marvell Tell has special upside at safety and defensive tackle Kevin Scott was described by more than one analyst as "the sleeper of Los Angeles" this past recruiting cycle. This class is a huge building block for coach Steve Sarkisian and staff.

MASCOT: J. PAT CARTER / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Cody Kessler	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	13	167.1	315-452-5	69.7	3826	39	294.3

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Justin Davis	13	129	595	4.6	4	45.8

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
JuJu Smith	13	54	724	13.4	5	55.7

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Anthony Sarao	13	38	36	74

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Su'a Cravens	13	5.0	44

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Su'a Cravens	3	47	15.7	1

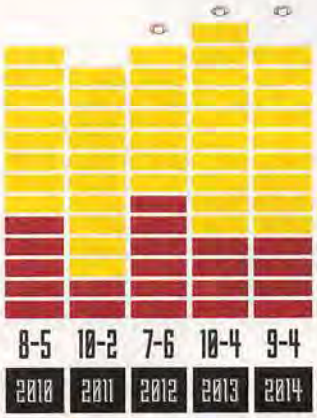
BEHIND THE SADDLE
Traveler, a noble white horse named after Civil War Confederate General Robert E. Lee's horse, gallops around the Coliseum with the **Trojan** warrior after each USC score.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	USC	OPP
SCORING	466	327
Points Per Game	35.8	25.2
FIRST DOWNS	308	302
Rushing	122	100
Passing	165	161
Penalty	21	41
RUSHING YARDAGE	2092	1734
Yards gained rushing	2466	2095
Yards lost rushing	374	361
Rushing Attempts	524	453
Average Per Rush	4.0	3.8
Average Per Game	160.9	133.4
TDs Rushing	18	20
PASSING YARDAGE	3856	3569
Comp-Att-Int	318-460-5	322-548-14
Average Per Pass	8.4	6.5
Average Per Catch	12.1	11.1
Average Per Game	296.6	274.5
TDs Passing	39	20
TOTAL OFFENSE	5948	5303
Total Plays	984	1001
Average Per Play	6.0	5.3
Average Per Game	457.5	407.9
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	44-974	59-1326
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	22-214	12-195
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	14-212	5-11
KICK RETURN AVG.	22.1	22.5
PUNT RETURN AVG.	9.7	16.2
INT RETURN AVG.	15.1	2.2
FUMBLES-LOST	14-7	20-9
PENALTIES-YARDS	115-1023	81-713
Average Per Game	78.7	54.8
PUNTS-YARDS	69-2748	77-3079
Average Per Punt	39.8	40.0
Net punt average	35.0	35.9
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:34	29:26
3RD-DOWN CONV.	97/208	70/200
3rd-Down Pct.	47%	35%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	15/24	15/26
4th-Down Pct.	62%	58%
SACKS BY-YARDS	33-219	32-228
MISC YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	63	42
FG-ATTEMPTS	9-11	11-18
ATTENDANCE	439630	304262
Games/Avg Per Game	6/73272	6/50710
Neutral Site Games		1/55789

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
USC	167	117	110	72	0	466
Opponent	53	96	92	86	0	327

5-YEAR RECORD 44-21



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB Cody Kessler (6-1, 210, Sr.)
Max Browne (6-5, 220, So.)
TB Justin Davis (6-1, 195, Jr.)
Tre Madden (6-1, 225, Sr.)
FB Soma Vainuku (6-0, 270, Sr.)
Jahleel Pinner (5-11, 235, Sr.)
LT Toa Lobendahn (6-3, 280, So.)
Chad Wheeler (6-7, 280, Jr.)
LG Damien Mama (6-5, 370, So.)
Khaliel Rodgers (6-3, 315, So.)
C Max Tuerk (6-6, 285, Sr.)
Khaliel Rodgers (6-3, 315, So.)
RG Viane Talamaivao (6-3, 330, So.)
Jordan Simmons (6-4, 350, Jr.)
RT Zach Banner (6-9, 350, Jr.)
Chad Wheeler (6-7, 280, Jr.)
TE Connor Spears (6-6, 240, So.)
Jalen Cope-Fitzpatrick (6-4, 250, Jr.)
WR Steven Mitchell (5-10, 185, So.)
Darreus Rogers (6-1, 215, Jr.)
WR JuJu Smith (6-2, 210, So.)
Ajene Harris (5-11, 180, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Delvon Simmons (6-5, 295, Sr.)
Cody Temple (6-2, 310, Sr.)
NT Antwaun Woods (6-1, 325, Sr.)
Kenny Bigelow (6-3, 310, So.)
DT Claude Pelon (6-4, 295, Sr.)
Greg Townsend Jr. (6-3, 275, Sr.)
OLB Su'a Cravens (6-1, 225, Jr.)
Quinton Powell (6-2, 200, Jr.)
MLB Anthony Sarao (6-0, 220, Sr.)
Olajuwon Tucker (6-3, 220, So.)
WLB Lamar Dawson (6-1, 230, Sr.)
Michael Hutchings (6-1, 210, Jr.)
OLB Scott Felix (6-2, 230, Jr.)
Jabari Ruffin (6-3, 240, Jr.)
CB Kevon Seymour (6-0, 185, Sr.)
Jonathan Lockett (5-11, 175, So.)
CB Adoree' Jackson (5-11, 185, So.)
Lamont Simmons (6-2, 185, Fr.)
FS Leon McQuay III (6-1, 185, Jr.)
Iman Marshall (6-1, 195, Fr.)
SS John Plattenburg (5-11, 180, So.)
Chris Hawkins (5-11, 185, So.)

SPECIALISTS

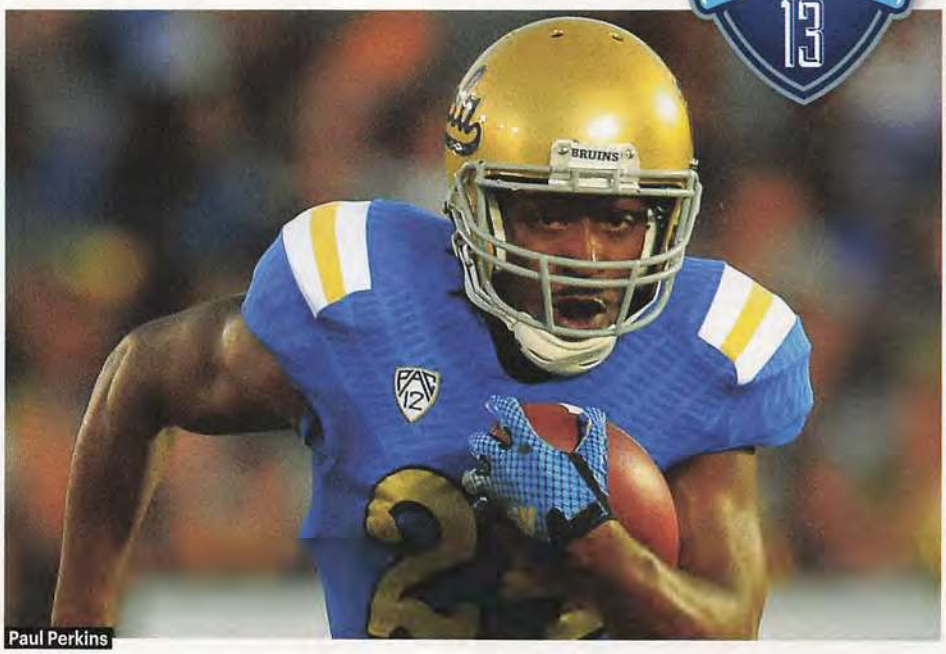
K Alex Wood (5-10, 175, Jr.)
P Kris Albarado (5-10, 200, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

UCLA BRUINS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 13

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 2


Paul Perkins

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Virginia	28-20
S.12	@UNLV	
S.19	BYU	
S.26	@ARIZONA	17-7
O.3	Arizona State	62-27
O.15	@STANFORD	10-31
O.22	California	36-34
O.31	Colorado	40-37
N.7	@OREGON STATE	
N.14	Washington State	
N.21	@UTAH	28-30
N.28	@USC	38-20

COACH

Jim Mora
Fourth year (29-11)
Career record: 29-11

Offensive coordinator: Noel Mazzone (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator: Tom Bradley (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat Kansas State in the Alamo Bowl, 40-35)
Stadium: Rose Bowl (92,542)
Tickets: 310-UCLA-WIN
Site: Los Angeles
Website: uclabruins.com
Twitter: @UCLAFootball

Quarterback intrigue doesn't get much better than this: With Brett Hundley leaving UCLA a year early for the NFL, the Bruins have to choose between a legacy or a prodigy. There's Jerry Neuheisel, the experienced, well-respected son of former UCLA quarterback and coach Rick Neuheisel. Then there's Josh Rosen, the smart, strong-armed star recruit who earned the nickname "Chosen Rosen" at nearby St. John Bosco High School. Winner gets control of a team loaded with depth and experience on both sides of the ball.

Neuheisel would be the easy choice in many situations. He's smart, has game experience and a moxie about him that he showed coming off the bench to help UCLA beat Texas last season when Hundley was hurt. It's also not a good idea to underestimate his genes. His dad just happened to once be a walk-on quarterback for the Bruins who turned into the 1983 Rose Bowl MVP and later became UCLA's coach.

But Rosen arrives as something of a can't-miss prospect, possessing intelligence, arm strength, accuracy, footwork and a more prototypical quarterback's size.

All that goes without saying that the Bruins also have a guy in sophomore Asiantii Woulard whom ESPN called the No. 1 dual-threat quarterback in his high school class.

Whoever gets the job should have plenty of protection and playmaking options that include the Pac-12's leading rusher last season, Paul Perkins.

The Bruins return four starters from the line, including center Jake Brendel, who has evolved into one of the team leaders, while tackle Simon Goines returns from a series of injuries that have stalled his promising career. Goines started as a freshman in 2012, suffered knee and leg injuries in 2013 and sat out last season with ankle issues and other concerns.

The Bruins love to throw out gobs of receivers, and they have the experience and talent to do it well this season. Just about everybody's back, most notably Jordan Payton, who blew up into Hundley's most frequent target last season, hauling in 67 catches for 954 yards. There's also Eldridge Massington, who showed promise last season after tearing his ACL before his senior season of high school and redshirting at UCLA in

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Paul Perkins, RB

Perkins is getting some early Heisman consideration after leading the Pac-12 in rushing in 2014 with 1,575 yards and nine touchdowns. Despite his production, he was not one of the four running backs chosen for the All-Pac-12 first or second teams. That snub could go a long way in motivating Perkins for a Heisman run. And, despite QB Brett Hundley's move to the NFL, he should be surrounded by enough remaining offensive talent to keep defenses from concentrating on him.

PERKINS: MARK J. TERRILL / AP

2013. The biggest concern on the line may have been that recruiter and offensive line coach Adrian Klemm was suspended over an investigation into alleged NCAA violations.

Perkins rushed for 1,575 yards last season, the second most in school history, and if his load gets too heavy, the Bruins can also turn to backup Nate Starks or even Steven Manfro, a strong receiving threat if he can return fully from a torn ACL.

Already solid last season, the defensive line has more good signs: Onetime star recruit Eddie Vanderdoes should be fully healthy for the first time in his college career. The Bruins also have had time to fully immerse juco transfer Takkarist McKinley in the system and conditioning program after he became eligible midway through last season.

There's no telling where, exactly, ubiquitous two-way standout Myles Jack might show up, but he may settle most likely into an inside linebacker spot and possibly some offensive rushing roles. Deon Hollins and Kenny Young both made impressions last season at linebacker, too. In the secondary, tough-minded Fabian Moreau may yet reach his considerable upside after switching from running back as a freshman. He was already second-team All-Pac-12 last season.

BOTTOM LINE

With Hundley, the Bruins might have been Pac-12 favorites. But there's so much internal competition and experience that UCLA could still be that team. It may just be a matter of whether the new quarterback can make the most of the talent around him.

Jerry Neuheisel

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

This Bruins class finished No. 12 nationally, topped by five-stars Josh Rosen (who arrives with comparisons to Troy Aikman), Keisean Lucier-South and Soso Jamabo. Jamabo is a versatile back who has good hands and can contribute early in the passing game. DeChaun Holiday is a 6-3 cornerback who some Pac-12 coaches think has as much pure upside as any defensive back on the West Coast in 2015. Tight end Chris Clark was one of the country's best as well and the Bruins held off Michigan, where he was once committed, to land him.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Josh Rosen, QB ★★★★★
2. Keisean Lucier-South, DE ★★★★★
3. Soso Jamabo, RB ★★★★★

NEUHEISEL: CHRIS CARLSON / AP; MASCOT: NICK UT / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Jerry Neuheisel	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	10	120.2	26-39-1	66.7	194	2	19.4

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Paul Perkins	13	251	1575	6.3	9	121.2

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Jordan Payton	13	67	954	14.2	7	73.4

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Myles Jack	13	58	30	88

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Deon Hollins	13	9.0	39

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Ishmael Adams	2	115	57.5	2
Marcus Rios	2	9	4.5	0

BEHIND THE MASK

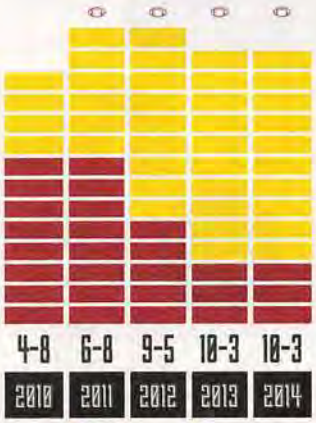
Little Joe Bruin, a Himalayan bear cub from India, and his replacement, Josephine, both grew too large to care for and had to be replaced by a costumed mascot. So in the 1960s, several male students took turns playing Joe Bruin. Both **Joe and Josephine**—introduced in 1967—are fixtures at UCLA events.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	UCLA	OPP
SCORING	435	365
Points Per Game	33.5	28.1
FIRST DOWNS	304	295
Rushing	144	111
Passing	142	151
Penalty	18	33
RUSHING YARDAGE	2724	1923
Yards gained rushing	3067	2217
Yards lost rushing	343	294
Rushing Attempts	557	505
Average Per Rush	4.9	3.8
Average Per Game	209.5	147.9
TDs Rushing	26	19
PASSING YARDAGE	3358	3258
Comp-Att-Int	298-435-6	306-497-11
Average Per Pass	7.7	6.6
Average Per Catch	11.3	10.6
Average Per Game	258.3	250.6
TDs Passing	24	22
TOTAL OFFENSE	6082	5181
Total Plays	992	1002
Average Per Play	6.1	5.2
Average Per Game	467.8	398.5
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	48-916	30-646
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	22-199	15-72
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	11-231	6-131
KICK RETURN AVG.	19.1	21.5
PUNT RETURN AVG.	9.0	4.8
INT RETURN AVG.	21.0	21.8
FUMBLES-LOST	22-10	12-5
PENALTIES-YARDS	104-979	74-664
Average Per Game	75.3	51.1
PUNTS-YARDS	70-2802	77-3452
Average Per Punt	40.0	44.8
Net punt average	37.9	40.9
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:10	30:50
3RD-DOWN CONV.	87/202	83/208
3rd-Down Pct.	43%	40%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	9/16	15/22
4th-Down Pct.	56%	68%
SACKS BY-YARDS	29-200	40-225
MISC YARDS	40	0
TDS SCORED	55	45
FG-ATTEMPTS	18-22	17-20
ATTENDANCE	459901	257871
Games/Avg Per Game	6/76650	5/51574
Neutral Site Games		2/60498

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
UCLA	98	145	106	77	9	435
Opponent	56	126	84	93	6	365

5-YEAR RECORD 39-27



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Jerry Neuheisel (6-1, 200, Jr.)
	Josh Rosen (6-4, 205, Fr.)
RB	Paul Perkins (5-11, 198, Jr.)
	Nate Starks (5-11, 205, So.)
LT	Conor McDermott (6-9, 295, Jr.)
	Poasi Moala (6-4, 275, So.)
LG	Scott Quessenberry (6-4, 280, Jr.)
	Kenny Lacy (6-4, 285, So.)
C	Jake Brendel (6-4, 290, Sr.)
	Scott Quessenberry (6-4, 280, Jr.)
RG	Alex Redmond (6-5, 297, Jr.)
	Zach Bateman (6-7, 320, Jr.)
RT	Simon Goines (6-7, 325, Jr.)
	Caleb Benenoch (6-5, 305, Jr.)
WR	Jordan Payton (6-1, 213, Sr.)
	Kenneth Walker III (5-10, 180, Jr.)
WR	Thomas Duarte (6-3, 223, Jr.)
	Tyler Scott (6-3, 217, Sr.)
WR	Devin Fuller (6-0, 195, Sr.)
	Mossi Johnson (6-0, 185, So.)
WR	Eldridge Massington (6-3, 210, So.)
	Alex Van Dyke (6-3, 212, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Takkarist McKinley (6-4, 230, Jr.)
	Jacob Tuioti-Mariner (6-2, 262, So.)
DT	Kenny Clark (6-3, 308, Jr.)
	Eli Ankou (6-3, 295, Jr.)
DE	Eddie Vanderdoes (6-3, 305, Jr.)
	Matt Dickerson (6-4, 270, So.)
OLB	Aaron Wallace (6-3, 243, Sr.)
	Cameron Judge (6-1, 220, Jr.)
ILB	Myles Jack (6-1, 232, Jr.)
	Jayon Brown (6-0, 220, Jr.)
ILB	Kenny Young (6-1, 230, So.)
	Isaako Savaiinaea (6-2, 233, Jr.)
OLB	Deon Hollins (6-0, 225, Jr.)
	Kene Orjioke (6-4, 238, Jr.)
CB	Fabian Moreau (6-0, 195, Sr.)
	Priest Willis (6-1, 196, Jr.)
CB	Ishmael Adams (5-8, 190, Jr.)
	Marcus Rios (6-0, 175, Jr.)
FS	Randall Goforth (5-10, 182, Jr.)
	Tahaan Goodman (6-1, 190, Jr.)
SS	Jaleel Wadood (5-10, 175, So.)
	Adarius Pickett (5-11, 192, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Ka'imi Fairbairn (6-0, 185, Sr.)
P	Matt Mengel (6-2, 210, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

ARIZONA WILDCATS

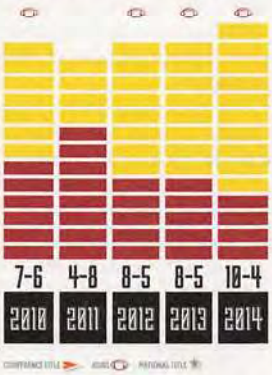
PAC-12 South

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **3**

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 17

Anu Solomon

5-YEAR RECORD 37-28



If only last season ended in November, Rich Rodriguez would have gone down in Arizona football history. The Wildcats, just 4-8 before he took over as head coach in 2012, won 10 of their first 12 games, including a shocking upset win at Oregon. They rose into the Top 10, beat rival Arizona State and, lo and behold, won the Pac-12 South.

Then December happened. The Wildcats were smoked in a rematch with Oregon in the Pac-12 Championship Game, then embarrassed early in a Fiesta Bowl loss to Boise State. It was a forgettable ending to an otherwise breakthrough season.

But experience and depth could help avoid a sour finish this time. The way quarterback Anu Solomon started last season—he threw 14 touchdowns during UA's 5-0 start—it was easy to forget he was just a freshman until he slumped down the stretch, banged up physically and mentally. Now he has 14 games of experience and still has a big, talented group of five top receivers to strike with, including Cayleb Jones. Then there's running back Nick Wilson, who blew away UA's freshman school record for rushing yards (1,375), taking up more slack from the loss of Ka'Deem Carey than expected. The problem is on the offensive line, where Arizona is replacing three starters, but having Cal transfer Freddie Tagaloa at tackle helps.

Defensively, Scooby Wright returns to the middle of Arizona's 3-3-5 defense after a stunningly effective season in which the Lombardi Award winner led the Pac-12 in tackles (11.6 per game), tackles for loss (2.07 per game) and was third in sacks (1.0). His strip-sack of Marcus Mariota that all but clinched the game in Eugene was no fluke.

Overall, though, the Wildcats' defense still needs improvement, and they have a lot of questions in the backfield. It might help that UA sent one-time five-star recruit DaVonte' Neal to cornerback after he was lost in a crowded rotation at slot receiver last season.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Anu Solomon, QB

As a redshirt freshman last season, Solomon was named Arizona's starting QB over senior Jesse Scroggins and wowed Wildcats fans with a 3,793-yard, 28-touchdown season. His yardage total ranks as the second most in Arizona history, while his touchdown total tied the record also held by Nick Foles and Willie Tuitama. So, basically, the 6-2, 205-pound Las Vegan has up to three more years to completely obliterate the Arizona (and maybe even Pac-12) record books.

BOTTOM LINE

For a team that lost steam at the end of last season, this year's schedule doesn't bode well. Arizona must play all 12 regular-season games without a single bye. That necessitates more depth and some luck with injuries. If the Wildcats can manage that, 10 more wins are possible.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	UTSA	26-23
S.12	@NEVADA	35-28
S.19	Northern Arizona	
S.26	UCLA	7-17
O.3	@STANFORD	
O.10	Oregon State	
O.17	@COLORADO	38-20
O.24	Washington State	
O.31	@WASHINGTON	27-26
N.7	@USC	26-28
N.14	Utah	42-10
N.21	@ARIZONA STATE	42-35

COACH

Rich Rodriguez
Fourth year (26-14)
Career record: 146-98-2

Offensive coordinators: Calvin Magee (fourth year) and Rod Smith (fourth year)
Defensive coordinator: Jeff Casteel (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 10-4
(Lost to Boise State in the Fiesta Bowl, 38-30)
Stadium: Arizona Stadium (56,029)
Tickets: 520-621-2287
Site: Tucson, Ariz.
Website: arizonawildcats.com
Twitter: @ArizonaFBall

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Anu Solomon (6-2, 205, So.)
RB	Nick Wilson (5-10, 199, So.)
LT	Freddie Tagaloa (6-8, 316, Jr.)
LG	Cayman Bundage (6-2, 281, Sr.)
C	Carter Wood (6-2, 274, Sr.)
RG	Jacob Alsadek (6-7, 298, So.)
RT	Lene Maiava (6-5, 301, Sr.)
WR	Cayleb Jones (6-3, 215, Jr.)
WR	Nate Phillips (5-7, 180, Jr.)
WR	Samajie Grant (5-9, 177, Jr.)
WR	David Richards (6-4, 213, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Reggie Gilbert (6-4, 262, Sr.)
NG	Parker Zellers (6-1, 247, So.)
DT	Anthony Fotu (6-2, 274, Jr.)
SLB	Cody Ippolito (6-2, 242, Jr.)
MLB	Scooby Wright (6-1, 246, Jr.)
WLB	DeAndre' Miller (6-3, 230, So.)
CB	Cam Denson (5-11, 168, So.)
CB	Jarvis McCall Jr. (6-2, 182, So.)
FS	Jamar Allah (6-1, 186, Sr.)
SS	Tellas Jones (6-0, 189, Jr.)
SS	Will Parks (6-1, 194, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Casey Skowron (5-10, 160, Sr.)
P	Drew Riggleman (6-2, 213, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Keenan Walker,** OT ★★★★
2. **Anthony Fotu,** DT ★★★★
3. **Cody Creason,** OG ★★★

The Wildcats' class ranked No. 8 in the Pac-12 and features excellent quality depth on the offensive line. Keenan Walker was an Under Armour All-American and one of the top Grand Canyon State prospects in the 2015 cycle. Cody Creason is a future star on the interior and look out for Canadian sleeper Harper Sherman down the road. Anthony Fotu enrolled for spring and was competing for a starting job.

SOLOMON: RICK SCUTER / AP

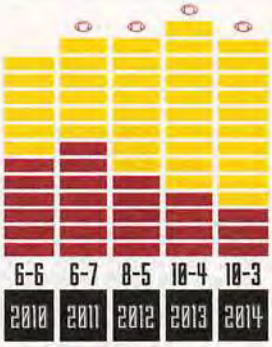
ARIZONA STATE
SUN DEVILS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 19

Salamo Fiso

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **4**

5-YEAR RECORD 48-25



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Mike Bercovici (6-1, 204, Sr.)
RB Demario Richard (5-10, 213, So.)
LT Evan Goodman (6-4, 314, Jr.)
LG Christian Westerman (6-4, 301, Sr.)
C Nick Kelly (6-2, 294, Sr.)
RG Vi Teofilo (6-3, 304, Sr.)
RT William McGehee (6-6, 312, Sr.)
TE Kody Kohl (6-3, 230, Jr.)
WR D.J. Foster (5-11, 195, Sr.)
WR Eric Lauderdale (6-2, 190, Jr.)
WR Gary Chambers (6-4, 211, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Tashon Smallwood (6-0, 285, So.)
DT Viliami Latu (6-2, 291, Jr.)
DT Demetrius Cherry (6-5, 298, Sr.)
DE Alani Latu (6-2, 255, So.)
SLB Salamo Fiso (6-1, 236, Jr.)
WLB D.J. Calhoun (6-0, 213, So.)
ROV Viliami Moeakiola (6-1, 212, Jr.)
CB Kweishi Brown (6-0, 206, Sr.)
CB Lloyd Carrington (6-0, 194, Sr.)
FS Jordan Simone (6-0, 193, Sr.)
SS James Johnson (6-1, 192, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K Zane Gonzalez (6-1, 189, Jr.)
P Matt Haack (6-1, 199, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Brady White,** QB ★★★★
2. **Joseph Wicker,** DE ★★★★
3. **Stanley Norman,** ATH ★★★★

The Sun Devils finished with their best class on paper under Todd Graham, ranking No. 20 nationally per 247Sports. Brady White, Joseph Wicker and Stanley Norman were all U.S. Army All-Americans. Arizona State also went to Virginia Beach and landed jumbo athlete Jaason Lewis. Defensive end Jalen Bates was an absolute steal out of Kaplan, La. (the Sun Devils signed three from the Pelican State). Also keep an eye on defensive tackle Dillon Faamatau from Norwalk, Calif., as another potential sleeper. All in all, this class will impact the ASU program greatly in the near future.

When Mike Bercovici's "Hail Mary" heave fell into Jaelen Strong's hands to beat USC last season, karma may have been at work. After all, it was perennial backup Bercovici who could have transferred out of ASU in 2012 when Brock Osweiler won the job and then again before last season, when he could have avoided Taylor Kelly's shadow for a second straight year by taking the grad-transfer route. But his patience paid off when Kelly suffered a foot injury that cost him three games. During that stretch, Bercovici threw for 1,243 yards while completing 63 percent of his passes, including what became known as the "Jael Mary." Now, for one season, Bercovici will get the starter's role full time.

One of his biggest targets again will be D.J. Foster, but this time he'll hit Foster as a wide receiver. Foster shifted from running back to receiver in a move that could be mutually beneficial: He needs an extended audition at receiver, where his best shot at the NFL is, and the Sun Devils needed to replace Strong, who left for the pros as a junior. Arizona State is also without receiver Cameron Smith, who will miss the season with a knee injury.

The Sun Devils can plug in plenty of rushing talent, too. Demario Richard is the likely starter after an encouraging freshman season, while ASU also has a powerful rusher in Kalen Ballage and an electric talent in De'Chavon Hayes, a juco transfer who sat out last season. There's also good depth and experience on the offensive line, led by center Nick Kelly.

Ballage is also fun to watch on the defensive side, as ASU's "Devilbacker," a hybrid end-rush linebacker. Arizona State was expected to start highly regarded juco transfer Davon Durant there but he was suspended in the spring after an arrest on suspicion of domestic violence. His return is still in doubt.

Elsewhere on the line and linebacker spots, ASU has good experience and depth, so much so that sophomores Christian Sam and D.J. Calhoun could beat out returning starters Salamo Fiso and Antonio Longino. In the secondary, Kweishi Brown and Lloyd Carrington might be one of the Pac-12's top cornerback duos.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Salamo Fiso, LB

With all the offense in the Pac-12, somebody's got to bring the D. Enter Fiso. One of five Sun Devils to record more than 70 tackles last year, Fiso made 83 stops with 11 coming behind the line of scrimmage. The 6-1, 235-pound senior also had 2.5 sacks and an interception against Pac-12 competition. Fiso leads an ASU defense that returns nine of its top 11 tacklers.

BOTTOM LINE

Bercovici's experience and more depth around him suggest ASU won't drop off after two straight 10-win seasons. But it will be tough to move up in the Pac-12 South. The Sun Devils will know exactly how tough early on: They'll play USC and UCLA in successive weeks to open league play.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Texas A&M (at Houston, TBT)	
S.12	Cal Poly	
S.18	New Mexico	58-23
S.26	USC	38-34
O.3	@UCLA	27-62
O.10	Colorado	38-24
O.17	@UTAH	19-16
O.29	Oregon	
N.7	@WASHINGTON STATE	52-31
N.14	Washington	24-10
N.21	Arizona	35-42
N.28	@CALIFORNIA	

COACH

Todd Graham
Fourth year (28-12)
Career record: 77-41

Offensive coordinator: Mike Norvell (fourth year)
Defensive coordinators: Keith Patterson (second year) and Chris Ball (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat Duke in the Sun Bowl, 36-31)
Stadium: Sun Devil Stadium (55,870)
Tickets: 480-727-0000
Site: Tempe, Ariz.
Website: thesundevils.com
Twitter: @FootballASU

PAC-12 South

FISO: RICK SCUTERI/AP

UTAH
UTES

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **5**

Devontae Booker

Just when his guys finally proved they can play in the Pac-12, capping a nine-win season with a Las Vegas Bowl win over Colorado State, Utah coach Kyle Whittingham watched his staff implode. His defensive coordinator (Kalani Sitake) and defensive line coach (Ilaisa Tuiaki) both joined Gary Andersen's new staff at Oregon State, while Dave Christensen—brought in to fix the Utes' stagnant offense—left for Texas A&M after just one season.

The good news: Utah returns eight starters on each side of the ball, and Whittingham managed to find some continuity on his staff.

While Christensen brought in new terminology and philosophy, Utah now has familiar faces running the offense as co-coordinators: Aaron Roderick, who has been on the Utah staff for 10 years coaching receivers and quarterbacks, along with Jim Harding (offensive line coach).

Together, they'll have to improve the conference's lowest total offense average (388.1 yards per game) somehow. The passing game particularly lacked any sort of fire, with quarterbacks Travis Wilson and Kendal Thompson directing a passing game that averaged just 197.7 yards last season.

There aren't issues on the ground. Powerful Devontae Booker was the Pac-12's second-leading rusher last season with an average of 116.3 yards per game, being so effective that Bubba Poole has shifted from running back to slot receiver to find more opportunity. While potential backup rusher Troy McCormick suffered a knee injury in the spring, juco transfer Joseph Williams may be promising enough to keep Poole at slot.

Kenneth Scott leads an otherwise young group of receivers. On the offensive line, Utah may shift J.J. Dielman over from the right side to replace left tackle Jeremiah Poutasi, who left for the NFL, and center Siaosi Aiono leads a strong line overall.

Fast, confident and tough, Utah's defense is in better shape. The linebacking unit is particularly strong with Jared Norris, Jason Whittingham and Gionni Paul, while the line returns most of the key figures that helped it lead the nation in sacks last season.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Devontae Booker, RB

Though not pegged as a starter entering last season, Booker won a spot as a regular and then went on to earn first-team all-conference honors. The 5-11, 212-pound senior, who spent two years at a junior college and sat out the 2013 campaign, was bursting at the seams to show his skills on the big stage. He did so in a big way, finishing second in the Pac-12 in rushing with 1,512 yards to go along with 10 rushing touchdowns.

BOTTOM LINE

The Utes' 5-4 conference record last season was their first winning mark in four years of Pac-12 membership. They have enough talent to sustain that level of success, but everyone else in the Pac-12 South may be better, too.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	Michigan	26-10
S.11	Utah State	
S.19	@FRESNO STATE	59-27
S.26	@OREGON	27-51
O.10	California	
O.17	Arizona State	16-19
O.24	@USC	24-21
O.31	Oregon State	29-23
N.7	@WASHINGTON	
N.14	@ARIZONA	10-42
N.21	UCLA	30-28
N.28	Colorado	38-34

COACH

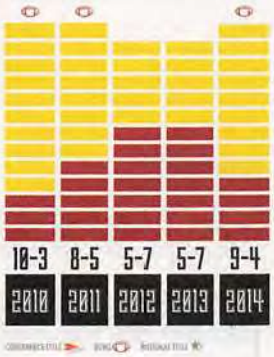
Kyle Whittingham
11th year (85-43)
Career record: 85-43

Offensive coordinators:
Jim Harding (first year)
Aaron Roderick (first year)
Defensive coordinator:
John Pease (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 9-4
(Beat Colorado State in the Las Vegas Bowl, 45-10)
Stadium: Rice-Eccles Stadium (45,017)
Tickets: 801-581-UTIX
Site: Salt Lake City
Website: utahutes.com
Twitter: @Utah_Football

5-YEAR RECORD 37-26



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Travis Wilson (6-7, 233, Sr.)
RB Devontae Booker (5-11, 212, Sr.)
LT J.J. Dielman (6-5, 295, Jr.)
LG Isaac Asiata (6-4, 315, Jr.)
C Siaosi Aiono (6-2, 305, Sr.)
RG Salesi Uhatafe (6-4, 315, So.)
RT Sam Tevi (6-5, 300, Jr.)
TE Siale Fakailoatonga (6-4, 251, Jr.)
WR Kenneth Scott (6-3, 208, Sr.)
WR Jameson Field (5-11, 185, So.)
WR Delshawn McClellon (5-9, 175, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Hunter Dimick (6-3, 266, Jr.)
DT Filipo Mokofisi (6-3, 285, So.)
NT Lowell Lotulelei (6-2, 310, So.)
DE Jason Fanaika (6-3, 270, Sr.)
OLB Gionni Paul (5-10, 225, Sr.)
MLB Jason Whittingham (6-2, 245, Sr.)
OLB Jared Norris (6-2, 234, Sr.)
CB Dominique Hatfield (5-10, 175, Jr.)
CB Reginald Porter (5-11, 181, Jr.)
FS Marcus Williams (6-0, 190, So.)
SS Tevin Carter (6-1, 210, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Andy Phillips (5-10, 205, Jr.)
P Tom Hackett (5-11, 195, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1 **Cory Butler,** WR ★★★
2 **Darrin Paulo,** OG ★★★
3 **George Wilson,** WR ★★★

The Utes signed one of the better classes of wide receivers in the country, led by Cory Butler and George Wilson and including 6-4 juco Deniko Carter, Texas juco slot Kyle Fulks and speedy Alfred Smith (Destrehan, La.). Keep an eye on juco running back Joseph Williams from ASA College in Brooklyn, N.Y., as he is likely undervalued and unknown nationally.

BOOKER: ALEX GALLARDO / AP

COLORADO BUFFALOES

PAC-12 South

5-YEAR RECORD 15-46

Addison Gillam

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **6**

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Sefo Liufau (6-4, 230, Jr.)
TB Christian Powell (6-0, 230, Sr.)
LT Jeromy Irwin (6-5, 295, Jr.)
LG Gerrad Kough (6-4, 295, So.)
C Alex Kelley (6-2, 305, Jr.)
RG Jonathan Huckins (6-3, 305, So.)
RT Stephane Nembot (6-7, 295, Sr.)
TE Sean Irwin (6-3, 245, Jr.)
WR Nelson Spruce (6-1, 195, Sr.)
WR Shay Fields (5-11, 170, So.)
WR Bryce Bobo (6-2, 190, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Derek McCartney (6-3, 240, So.)
DT Justin Solis (6-1, 305, Sr.)
DT Samson Kafovalu (6-5, 245, Jr.)
DE Jimmie Gilbert (6-4, 230, Jr.)
MLB Addison Gillam (6-3, 225, Jr.)
WLB Kenneth Olugbode (6-0, 210, Jr.)
CB Ken Crawley (6-1, 180, Sr.)
CB Ahkello Witherspoon (6-3, 185, Jr.)
NB Chidobe Awuzie (6-0, 190, Jr.)
FS Evan White (6-2, 195, So.)
SS Tedric Thompson (6-0, 200, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Diego Gonzalez (5-11, 210, Jr.)
P Alex Kinney (6-0, 195, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Tim Lynott,** OG ★★★★
2. **Patrick Carr,** RB ★★★
3. **Nu'umotu Falo,** OLB ★★★

The Buffs added help on both lines of scrimmage as eight of their 19 signees were linemen, including Tim Lynott, who was one of the top prospects in the state of Colorado for the 2015 cycle. Patrick Carr is an explosive playmaker from the Houston area and the Buffaloes also signed a quarterback, Steven Montez of El Paso, from the Lone Star State.

By ditching soft drinks and toxic foods, while working out in the early mornings, Colorado coach Mike MacIntyre dropped 60 pounds before last season. While his new look was obvious, you had to look a little harder to find improvement in his team.

But scratch the surface of the Buffaloes' 0-9 Pac-12 record and there was actually evidence that the program started trending the right way. Colorado went to double overtime in losses to Cal and UCLA, and lost four conference games by a total of only 15 points. Of its 10 losses overall, Colorado was blown out only twice and actually held a lead in the second half of six losses. In Pac-12 play, CU was outscored by a total of 124 points, down from 215 in 2013.

Experience should help the Buffs get over the hump. Colorado had 32 underclassmen on its midseason two-deep last season, the most in the Pac-12.

Although Colorado must replace both guards, its passing game has a proven connection between quarterback Sefo Liufau and wide receiver Nelson Spruce. Together, they connected for 1,198 yards and 12 touchdowns last season.

They will be more effective if the Buffs can find help at the guard spots and if somebody emerges from a group of serviceable rushers. There could be hope in Aaron Baltazar, who was Boise State's second-leading rusher as a freshman before going the juco route and eventually landing in Boulder.

The Buffs should also be better defensively, with good experience returning on the line and in the secondary, and Addison Gillam can be one of the Pac-12's best linebackers if he stays healthy. Gillam suffered a host of maladies last season, including concussions and bronchitis.

The Buffs have used a 4-3 formation and a 3-4 but might go with the nickel most often. The versatile Chidobe Awuzie is key—he's able to play nickel, safety or corner. The line entered the summer unsure about Josh Tupou, who was arrested after a house party fight, but the Buffs have help to fall back on if he's not around. Justin Solis is almost a body double of Tupou who showed improvement in the spring.

DIFFERENCE-MAKERS

Addison Gillam, LB
Kenneth Olugbode, LB

When it comes to the big hits, these guys are like Bugsy Siegel and Meyer Lansky. In other words, ballcarriers, watch your back. As sophomores last season the Olugbode-Gillam duo finished first and second on the team in tackles, respectively, combining for 161. The 6-3, 225-pound Gillam also chipped in 3.5 sacks and six tackles for loss while the 6-0, 210 Olugbode recovered two fumbles and broke up three passes.

BOTTOM LINE

A little extra endurance and experience could help the Buffs close out a few games this time around.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	@HAWAII	21-12
S.12	Massachusetts	41-38
S.19	Colorado State (at Denver, CO)	17-31
S.26	Nicholls State	
O.3	Oregon	10-44
O.10	@ARIZONA STATE	24-38
O.17	Arizona	20-38
O.24	@OREGON STATE	31-36
O.31	@UCLA	37-40
N.7	Stanford	
N.13	USC	28-56
N.21	@WASHINGTON STATE	
N.28	@UTAH	34-38

COACH

Mike MacIntyre
Third year (6-18)
Career record: 22-39
Offensive coordinator: Brian Lindgren (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Jim Leavitt (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 2-10
Stadium: Folsom Field (53,613)
Tickets: 800-87-BUFFS
Site: Boulder, Colo.
Website: cubuffs.com
Twitter: @RunRalphieRun

GILLAM: RICK SCUTERI / AP

PROJECTED FINISH

East Division

1. **Georgia**
   Bowl Projection: Fiesta Bowl
2. **Tennessee**
   Bowl Projection: Citrus Bowl
3. **Missouri**
   Bowl Projection: TaxSlayer Bowl
4. **Florida**
   Bowl Projection: Belk Bowl
5. **South Carolina**
   Bowl Projection: Liberty Bowl
6. **Kentucky**
7. **Vanderbilt**

West Division

1. **Auburn**
   Bowl Projection: CFF Semifinals (Cotton Bowl)
2. **Alabama**
   Bowl Projection: Sugar Bowl
3. **LSU**
   Bowl Projection: Outback Bowl
4. **Arkansas**
   Bowl Projection: Music City Bowl
5. **Ole Miss**
   Bowl Projection: Texas Bowl
6. **Mississippi State**
   Bowl Projection: Independence Bowl
7. **Texas A&M**
   Bowl Projection: Birmingham Bowl

Nick Chubb, Georgia

Alabama coach Nick Saban

Chinks beginning to show in mighty SEC's armor?

BY SCOTT RABALAIS | *The Advocate (Baton Rouge, La.)*

As far as SEC pride is concerned, it's a disturbing trend.

The conference went from the last of its seven straight BCS national titles with Alabama beating Notre Dame after the 2012 season to Auburn losing the final BCS Championship Game to Florida State to Alabama being bounced from the inaugural College Football Playoffs with a semifinal loss to eventual champ Ohio State in the Sugar Bowl.

Now heading into 2015, the question borders on the unthinkable: Will the SEC be shut out of the four-team playoff in just its second year?

It could happen. Every SEC team appears to have question marks, or at least a pressing issue that could leave them a critical loss or two short of the CFP.

There are teams breaking in new starting quarterbacks and teams bringing in new head coaches and teams swapping coordinators and position coaches like a high-stakes game of professional-grade free agency. In the case of perennial power Florida, it's all three.

Everything about the conference seems to be changing, and not necessarily in comforting ways. Even SEC commissioner Mike Slive is scheduled to retire this summer and be replaced by longtime lieutenant Greg Sankey.

It was Slive who ushered Missouri and Texas A&M into the SEC, Slive who brokered the deal with ESPN to create the lucrative new SEC Network, and even Slive who took the point demanding big five conference schools like those in the SEC have more autonomy under NCAA law. The SEC led the way in changing the very governance of college athletics itself.

With Slive gone, the SEC seems a little less relevant, even as it rakes in millions more from its own network.

By its nature, the four-team CFP is guaranteed to lock out at least one of the Big Five conference champions. The SEC has a fallback position, poised to send its champion or highest-ranked representative to the Sugar Bowl—when the Sugar isn't hosting a CFP semifinal—against a similar team from the Big 12.

It's referred to as the "Champions Bowl," and it's an option this year. Who knew the SEC might have to use it so quickly?

SABAN: BRYNN ANDERSON / AP; CHUBB: NELL REDMOND / AP; PRECOTT: DAVE MARTIN / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Losing ground?: The SEC's reign as college football's supreme power clearly appears to have eroded. The conference will have to fight to make a CFP semifinal this season.**

2015 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by J.C. Shurburtt, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RANK	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	POINTS
1	Alabama	24	6	14	3	311.08
2	Tennessee	29	1	15	12	286.12
3	LSU	25	2	11	10	285.86
4	Georgia	29	2	12	15	282.08
5	Auburn	27	1	19	7	277.95
6	Texas A&M	25	3	11	11	270.51
7	Ole Miss	22	0	7	15	245.31
8	Mississippi State	28	0	7	21	239.02
9	South Carolina	30	0	10	19	236.78
10	Florida	21	2	3	16	228.39
11	Arkansas	23	0	7	16	221.02
12	Missouri	23	1	2	19	217.02
13	Kentucky	22	0	2	17	193.26
14	Vanderbilt	18	0	3	14	181.80

ALL-SEC

OFFENSE

- QB **Dak Prescott,** Sr., Mississippi State
- RB **Nick Chubb,** So., Georgia
- RB **Leonard Fournette,** So., LSU
- OL **Vadal Alexander,** Sr., LSU
- OL **Greg Pyke,** Jr., Georgia
- OL **Evan Boehm,** Sr., Missouri
- OL **Denver Kirkland,** Jr., Arkansas
- OL **Laremy Tunsil,** Jr., Ole Miss
- TE **Evan Engram,** Jr., Ole Miss
- WR **Duke Williams,** Sr., Auburn
- WR **Laquon Treadwell,** Jr., Ole Miss

DEFENSE

- DL **Chris Jones,** Jr., Mississippi State
- DL **Robert Nkemdiche,** Jr., Ole Miss
- DL **A'Shawn Robinson,** Jr., Alabama
- DL **Myles Garrett,** So., Texas A&M
- LB **Reggie Ragland,** Sr., Alabama
- LB **Leonard Floyd,** Jr., Georgia
- LB **Kentrell Brothers,** Sr., Missouri
- DB **Vernon Hargreaves III,** Jr., Florida
- DB **Cameron Sutton,** Jr., Tennessee
- DB **Jalen Mills,** Sr., LSU
- DB **Tony Conner,** Jr., Ole Miss

SPECIALISTS

- K **Austin MacGinnis,** So., Kentucky
- P **JK Scott,** So., Alabama

PRESEASON MVP

No SEC player has meant this much to his program since Auburn's Cam Newton. The Bulldogs quarterback ranked first in the SEC in total offense (341.2 yards per game), second in passing (265.3) and ninth in rushing (75.8) and will have to bear even more of the load with Josh Robinson gone.

Dak Prescott

OVERRATED

ALABAMA

SEC dominance isn't a foregone conclusion anymore. Neither is Alabama's. The Tide must find a new quarterback, retool the skill positions and repair their defensive reputation.

UNDERRATED

TENNESSEE

Joshua Dobbs is one of the SEC's most exciting quarterbacks, and the O-line and running game are full of veterans. The Vols could be Georgia's top challenger in the East.

2 Getting defensive: Maybe SEC dominance is eroding because of defense. The annual points and total defense statistical leaders' average per game has risen for three straight years.

3 Trading places: Half the conference has seen coaches switch from one school to another, namely Will Muschamp (Florida to Auburn) and John Chavis (LSU to Texas A&M).

RATING THE SEC

FASTEST RECEIVER
Speedy Noil, Texas A&M
Last season became first A&M player with a 40-yard catch, a 50-yard kickoff return and 60-yard punt return in the same game.

BEST HANDS
Ricardo Louis, WR, Auburn
Even more than a year after his unbelievable catch to beat Georgia in 2013, Louis' miracle play still continues to amaze.

BEST PASSING QB
Dak Prescott, Mississippi State
Second in the SEC last year in yards per game, third in percentage and total yards, fourth in passing efficiency, Prescott sets the standard.

BEST RUNNING QB
Dak Prescott, Mississippi State
The SEC leader in total offense rushed for 986 yards last season. With Josh Robinson gone, he may have to tote the rock even more often.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Nick Chubb, Georgia
He can beat you with power or finesse. No truth to the rumor he was built in a lab on the UGA campus.

BEST INSTINCTS
Evan Engram, TE, Ole Miss
Doesn't have "run-by-you" speed but catches everything in his zone, a big key as the Rebels break in a new QB.

BEST ATHLETE
Pharoh Cooper, WR, South Carolina
Also plays quarterback in a pinch. There are those in South Carolina who say he can catch his own passes.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED (OFF THE FIELD)
Vernon Hargreaves III, CB, Florida
His maturity and success at a young level bodes well for his post college football future, which seems certain to start in 2016.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Joshua Dobbs, QB, Tennessee
Or should we say, he'd best be best under pressure. Expectations are running high in Big Orange country.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Laremy Tunsil, OT, Ole Miss
"The Blind Side, Part II." The sequel may be better than the original.

TOP IMPACT FROSH
Byron Cowart, DE, Auburn
A consensus top-10 prospect, Cowart will play this fall. The bigger question appears to be when he will start.

HARDEST HITTER
Myles Garrett, DE, Texas A&M
The SEC's returning sack leader with 11.5, Garrett will be starring in many an SEC quarterback's nightmares this season.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Ish Witter, RB, Missouri
Witter only stands 5-10, but he will stand tall this season as Mizzou's No. 2 back behind 1,000-yard rusher Russell Hansbrough.

BEST INTERVIEW
Steve Spurrier, South Carolina
Even though he bailed on a couple of interviews after losses last season, Spurrier is the last of a refreshingly frank bygone era.

BEST COACH AS STRATEGIST
Gary Pinkel, Missouri
Out recruited and at a facilities disadvantage to the so-called SEC powers, Pinkel steering Mizzou to two straight SEC title games is an unbelievable achievement.

BEST COACH AS RECRUITER
Nick Saban, Alabama
Those No. 1 recruiting classes every year must get monotonous, no? Um, no.

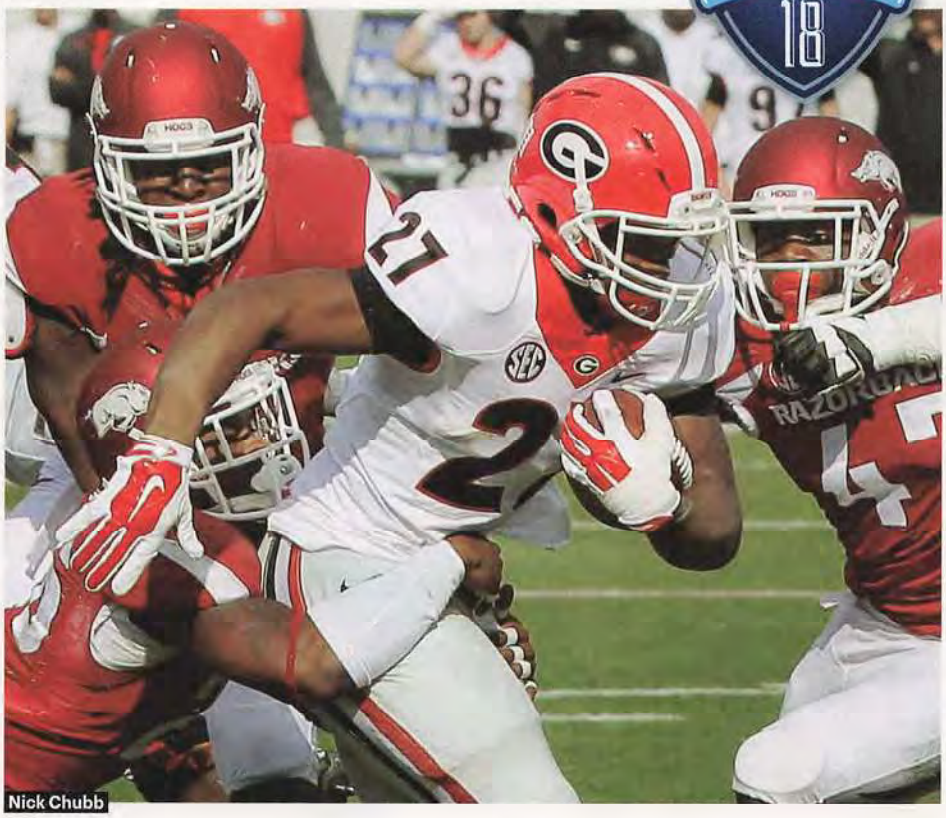
HOTTEST SEAT
Derek Mason, Vanderbilt
Mason punted four assistants after a dismal year one, including both coordinators, and took over the defense. From here, it's progress or a pink slip.

BEST VENUE
Neyland Stadium, Tennessee
The Volunteer Navy, fall colors to match UT orange on the hillsides and the Vols are winning again. What's not to like?

GEORGIA BULLDOGS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 18

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 1


Nick Chubb

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Louisiana-Monroe	
S.12	@VANDERBILT	44-17
S.19	South Carolina	35-38
S.26	Southern	
O.3	Alabama	
O.10	@TENNESSEE	35-32
O.17	Missouri	34-0
O.31	Florida (at Jacksonville, FL)	20-38
N.7	Kentucky	63-31
N.14	@AUBURN	34-7
N.21	Georgia Southern	
N.28	@GEORGIA TECH	24-30

COACH

Mark Richt
15th year (136-48)
Career record: 136-48

Offensive coordinator:
Brian Schottenheimer (first year)
Defensive coordinator:
Jeremy Pruitt (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat Louisville in the Belk Bowl, 37-14)
Stadium: Sanford Stadium (92,746)
Tickets: 877-542-1231
Site: Athens, Ga.
Website: georgiadogs.com
Twitter: @FootballUGA

For Georgia, the favorite's role in the SEC East is as familiar as the hedges ringing the lush, green grass of Sanford Stadium.

The Bulldogs are the top pick yet again, despite the fact they face big staff changes for the second straight year and some of the same crucial personnel questions as their pursuers.

Coach Mark Richt, entering his 15th season, completely restocked his defensive staff in 2014, Georgia's first such wholesale changes on that side of the ball in 50 years. For 2015 he has a new offensive coordinator in Brian Schottenheimer, a new running backs coach in Thomas Brown and a new offensive line coach in Rob Sale. To make room for Brown, Bryan McClendon slid from coaching running backs out to wide receivers.

The uncertainty of replacing a proven starting quarterback that has plagued many SEC campuses this offseason hasn't spared Georgia. Hutson Mason is gone after his one full season as a starter, leaving the job to sophomore Brice Ramsey.

Probably. Ramsey does have the most experience, having played eight games last year while completing 24 of 39 passes for 333 yards, three touchdowns and two interceptions. But his outing in Georgia's Belk Bowl win over Louisville after Mason was injured (4 of 9, 51 yards, interception) wasn't overwhelming, so few are completely ruling out the candidacy of junior Faton Bauta (4 of 5, 48 yards). That makes this the first year since at least 2010 when Georgia went into the fall with the position in doubt.

There's no doubting who the Top Dawg is at tailback. Nick Chubb exploded on the scene in an almost Herschel Walker-like way last season, rushing for 1,547 yards (second most in the SEC) and 14 TDs while veterans

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Nick Chubb, RB

Chubb was supposed to spend his freshman year learning from Keith Marshall and all-everything back Todd Gurley. Marshall was hampered with injuries and played just three games, while Gurley's dominant season (911 yards in six games) was disrupted by a suspension and later an ACL tear. Chubb picked up where Gurley left off, rushing for 1,323 yards after Gurley's suspension, including 266 yards in a 37-14 Belk Bowl win over Louisville, and finishing with 1,547 yards (second in the SEC).

CHUBB: DANNY JOHNSTON / AP

Todd Gurley and Keith Marshall were beaten down by injuries. Chubb recorded eight straight 100-yard games, the first Georgia back to do that since Walker.

Marshall, who has played in just eight games combined the last two seasons, could be Chubb's backup, but his injury history suggests the senior could get beaten out by sophomore Sony Michel (64 carries, 410 yards, 5 TDs).

Georgia had big losses among its pass catchers with four of the top seven now departed. Senior Malcolm Mitchell (31 catches, 248 yards, 3 TDs) is the Bulldogs' top returning receiver, followed by sophomore tight end Jeb Blazevich (18, 269, 2). Two names to watch: senior Justin Scott-Wesley, who played in just six games last season, and Terry Godwin, a five-star athlete prospect expected to play receiver.

The offensive line is a strength with only center David Andrews having to be replaced, likely by Hunter Long. John Theus and Kolton Houston anchor the tackle spots while Greg Pyke is an All-SEC caliber guard.

Damian Swann is gone at cornerback, leaving the top spot on the edge to Aaron Davis (40 tackles, 1 INT). Devin Bowman gets penciled in as a backup on both sides to start but could push Malkom Parrish for a starting role. Junior Quincy Mauger returns at strong safety with 51 tackles and a team-best four interceptions.

There is continuity on special teams where Marshall Morgan and Collin Barber return at kicker and punter, respectively. Morgan made 67 of 68 extra points and 16 of 21 field goals (though just 3 of 6 from 40-49 yards) while Barber averaged a pedestrian 39.3 yards per punt.

BOTTOM LINE

Everyone in the SEC East has their flaws, but Georgia gets tabbed the favorite because of Chubb, Richt's long-term success and the fact no one believes Missouri will win the division a third straight year. It won't be a picnic, though. Road games at Tennessee and Auburn could prove the Bulldogs' undoing if they're not careful, and an Oct. 17 home game with Missouri may set up the Bulldogs or Tigers as the frontrunner for the division title.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Georgia finished with the nation's sixth-ranked class per 247Sports and it's a class that fills needs across the board. The Bulldogs signed seven defensive linemen, including Trent Thompson, the No. 1 overall prospect in the class of 2015 out of Westover High in Albany, Ga. Thompson should play right away. Georgia also landed eight defensive backs, including four-star safety Rashad Roundtree and four-star cornerback Rico McGraw. They are among several incoming recruits who can push for playing time this year in Athens. Terry Godwin is a shifty, speedy playmaker who can impact the game in a number of ways. This class gives Georgia a solid defensive foundation for years to come and will be the one that second-year defensive coordinator Jeremy Pruitt can use to restore UGA to its former glory on that side of the ball.

TOP SIGNEES

1. Trent Thompson, DT ★★★★★
2. Terry Godwin, ATH ★★★★★
3. Jonathan Ledbetter, DE ★★★★

MASCOT: JOHN BAZEMORE / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Brice Ramsey	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	8	148.4	24-39-2	61.5	333	3	41.6

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Nick Chubb	13	219	1547	7.1	14	119.0

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Malcolm Mitchell	9	31	248	8.0	3	27.6

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jordan Jenkins	13	32	38	70

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Leonard Floyd	12	6.0	50

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Quincy Mauger	4	21	5.2	0

BEHIND THE COLLAR

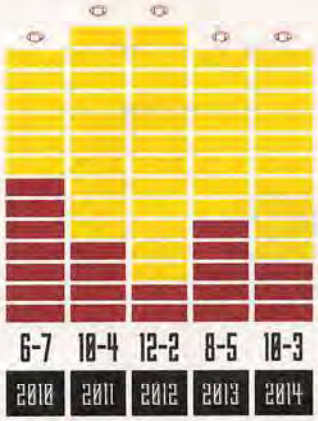
Uga, who comes from the same line of English bulldogs owned by famed Savannah trial lawyer Sonny Seiler, has graced the cover of *Sports Illustrated* and appeared in the movie "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil." The current version, Uga IX, is a direct descendent of Uga I, who was first introduced in 1956.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	GEORGIA	OPP
SCORING	537	269
Points Per Game	41.3	20.7
FIRST DOWNS	298	252
Rushing	154	133
Passing	126	100
Penalty	18	19
RUSHING YARDAGE	3352	2169
Yards gained rushing	3561	2524
Yards lost rushing	209	355
Rushing Attempts	555	526
Average Per Rush	6.0	4.1
Average Per Game	257.8	166.8
TDs Rushing	38	23
PASSING YARDAGE	2599	2215
Comp-Att-Int	217-322-6	204-379-16
Average Per Pass	8.1	5.8
Average Per Catch	12.0	10.9
Average Per Game	199.9	170.4
TDs Passing	24	13
TOTAL OFFENSE	5951	4384
Total Plays	877	905
Average Per Play	6.8	4.8
Average Per Game	457.8	337.2
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	29-649	64-1232
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	31-325	10-47
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	16-166	6-41
KICK RETURN AVG.	22.4	19.2
PUNT RETURN AVG.	10.5	4.7
INT RETURN AVG.	10.4	6.8
FUMBLES-LOST	21-7	25-13
PENALTIES-YARDS	65-527	67-587
Average Per Game	40.5	45.2
PUNTS-YARDS	43-1630	74-3059
Average Per Punt	37.9	41.3
Net punt average	36.3	36.4
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:16	30:44
3RD-DOWN CONV.	81/163	75/190
3rd-Down Pct.	50%	39%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	12/15	12/19
4th-Down Pct.	80%	63%
SACKS BY-YARDS	28-231	17-110
MISC YARDS	16	0
TDS SCORED	70	36
FG-ATTEMPTS	16-21	7-11
ATTENDANCE	649222	215552
Games/Avg Per Game	7/92746	3/71851
Neutral Site Games		3/61211

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Georgia	159	150	93	135	0	537
Opponent	51	86	47	79	6	269

5-YEAR RECORD 46-21



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Brice Ramsey (6-3, 216, So.)
	Faton Bauta (6-3, 218, Jr.)
FB	Quayvon Hicks (6-2, 257, Sr.)
	Christian Payne (6-1, 222, So.)
RB	Nick Chubb (5-10, 228, So.)
	Sony Michel (5-11, 208, So.)
LT	John Theus (6-6, 313, Sr.)
	Aulden Bynum (6-5, 276, So.)
LG	Brandon Kublanow (6-3, 294, Jr.)
	Isaiah Wynn (6-2, 283, So.)
C	Hunter Long (6-4, 302, Sr.)
	Isaiah Wynn (6-2, 283, So.)
RG	Greg Pyke (6-6, 321, Jr.)
	Dyshon Sims (6-4, 302, So.)
RT	Kolton Houston (6-5, 287, Sr.)
	Kendall Baker (6-6, 310, Fr.)
TE	Jeb Blazevich (6-5, 232, So.)
	Jay Rome (6-6, 248, Sr.)
WR	Malcolm Mitchell (6-1, 195, Sr.)
	Blake Tibbs (6-2, 180, Jr.)
WR	Reggie Davis (6-0, 170, Jr.)
	Isaiah McKenzie (5-8, 164, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Sterling Bailey (6-3, 280, Sr.)
	Michael Barnett (6-5, 258, Fr.)
NT	Chris Mayes (6-4, 317, Sr.)
	Trent Thompson (6-4, 285, Fr.)
DE	Josh Dawson (6-4, 266, Sr.)
	James DeLoach (6-3, 276, Sr.)
OLB	Leonard Floyd (6-4, 230, Jr.)
	Lorenzo Carter (6-6, 237, So.)
ILB	Reggie Carter (6-1, 231, Jr.)
	Jake Ganus (6-2, 225, Sr.)
ILB	Tim Kimbrough (6-0, 230, Jr.)
	Chuks Amaechi (6-3, 220, Jr.)
OLB	Jordan Jenkins (6-3, 252, Sr.)
	James DeLoach (6-3, 276, Jr.)
CB	Malkom Parrish (5-10, 194, So.)
	Devin Bowman (6-0, 179, Sr.)
CB	Aaron Davis (6-1, 189, So.)
	Devin Bowman (6-0, 179, Sr.)
SS	Quincy Mauger (6-0, 199, Jr.)
	Tramel Terry (6-0, 197, So.)
FS	Dominick Sanders (6-0, 187, So.)
	Tramel Terry (6-0, 197, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Marshall Morgan (6-3, 200, Sr.)
P	Collin Barber (6-2, 208, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

TENNESSEE
VOLUNTEERS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 22

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 2

Curt Maggitt

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Bowling Green (at Nashville, TN)	
S.12	Oklahoma	10-34
S.19	Western Carolina	
S.26	@FLORIDA	9-10
O.3	Arkansas	
O.10	Georgia	32-35
O.24	@ALABAMA	20-34
O.31	@KENTUCKY	50-16
N.7	South Carolina	45-42
N.14	North Texas	
N.21	@MISSOURI	21-29
N.28	Vanderbilt	24-17

COACH
Butch Jones
Third year (12-13)
Career record: 62-40

Offensive coordinator: Mike DeBord (first year)
Defensive coordinator: John Jancek (third year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat Iowa in the TaxSlayer Bowl, 45-28)
Stadium: Neyland Stadium (102,455)
Tickets: 800-332-VOLS
Site: Knoxville, Tenn.
Website: utsports.com
Twitter: @Vol_Football

Rocky top? Tennessee football fans these days have to look down to see Rocky Top.

Two promising seasons and two promising recruiting classes under coach Butch Jones have the Volunteers' excitement level higher than the Smoky Mountains. Tennessee went just 7-6 last season, but the Vols won four of their last five, including a convincing 45-28 victory over Iowa in the TaxSlayer Bowl.

Tennessee is rebuilding with the kind of talent not seen in Knoxville in years. The question is whether the Vols are ready for an ascent to the top of the seemingly wide-open SEC East.

Jones would like to douse the growing wildfire of expectations, but that may be difficult.

"We have not arrived," he said as spring practice began. "We're a long ways away from where we need to be from a competitive depth standpoint to be really able to compete at a high level and an elite level."

Still, even Jones has to accept there will be excitement. It starts at quarterback with the return of Joshua Dobbs.

The junior took over for Justin Worley after he went down with a season-ending shoulder injury. Dobbs captained Tennessee's 4-1 finish, completing 112 of 177 passes for 1,206 yards with nine touchdowns and six interceptions in six games played. Dobbs is a serious dual threat, finishing second on the team with 469 net yards rushing on 104 carries with a team-best eight touchdowns.

Jalen Hurd returns after leading the Vols with 899 yards and five TDs. He will be backed up by highly touted junior-college transfer Alvin Kamara, who originally signed with Alabama.

Dobbs will have plenty of passing targets to choose from. Including Hurd and tight end Ethan Wolf, Tennessee returns its top seven receivers from 2014, led by Alton "Pig" Howard (54 catches, 618 yards, 1 TD) and Von Pearson (38 catches, 393 yards, five TDs).

The offensive line was a liability in 2014

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Curt Maggitt, LB

Maggitt is the Vols' model of perseverance after being out nearly two years with an ACL tear. Upon his return last year, he had the dual role of being a defensive stalwart and mentoring then-freshman Derek Barnett. The big bruisers (both 6-3 and more than 245 pounds) combined for 120 tackles, 35 tackles for loss and a sack total of 21 that ranks first in the nation among returning teammates.

MAGGITT: WADE PAYNE/AP

but should be improved this season. Right tackle does remain a question mark where Dontavius Blair is penciled in as the starter.

In an unusual twist, Jones hired Mike DeBord to be Tennessee's offensive coordinator, replacing Mike Bajakian after he left to become quarterbacks coach at Tampa Bay. Jones was offensive coordinator under DeBord at Central Michigan from 2001-03. DeBord last coached in 2012 with the Chicago Bears, spending the last two years in athletic administration at Michigan.

Tennessee was a middle of the SEC pack defensive unit last season (passing yards, fourth; total yards allowed, eighth; scoring and rushing, ninth). Sophomore defensive end Derek Barnett is symbolic of the Vols' up-and-coming image. As a freshman, Barnett recorded 10 sacks and 20.5 tackles for loss, an SEC best 18 of them in Tennessee's eight conference games.

Linebacker A.J. Johnson and his 101 tackles have left Knoxville, but fortunately for the Vols, Jalen Reeves-Maybin and his 101 stops are back.

Jakob Johnson (14 tackles) takes over for A.J. Johnson at middle linebacker, though with a considerable drop off in experience. Dillon Bates, son of Tennessee great Bill Bates, is his backup. Fifth-year senior Curt Maggitt (48 tackles) will play outside or slip down to defensive end when Tennessee goes to an odd front.

Cameron Sutton (37 tackles, three interceptions) is ready for an All-SEC season at cornerback. Free safety Brian Randolph leads the secondary with 88 tackles (plus two INTs).

Aaron Medley continued the Tennessee tradition of quality kickers last season, making 20 of 26 field-goal attempts and all but one extra point. Incoming freshman Tommy Townsend takes over punting duties from Matt Darr.

BOTTOM LINE

There is reason for optimism in Knoxville, but it should be cautious. The talent and coaching is upgraded but there is still plenty of youth on this team, still lessons to be learned. The East is up for grabs and the Vols could finish first, but this team is probably still a year away. Eight or nine wins is doable and reasonable.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

This class, which finished No. 4 nationally per 247Sports, is another roster-building effort from coach Butch Jones and the Vols staff. There may not be a bigger instant-impact player in the SEC than Alvin Kamara, the former Alabama speed back who bounced to Knoxville from Hutchinson (Kan.) Community College. During spring practice, he was already making noise. Kahlil McKenzie and fellow defensive tackle Shy Tuttle, who enrolled early, should push for playing time. The Vols also signed three quarterbacks, including Texas pocket passer Quinten Dormady, California dual threat Sheriron Jones and in-state athlete Jauan Jennings, who could be an NFL prospect at safety. Offensive tackle Drew Richmond, from Memphis, may develop into a star at that position.

TOP SIGNEES

1. Kahlil McKenzie, DT ★★★★★
2. Kyle Phillips, DE ★★★★
3. Preston Williams, WR ★★★★

MASCOT: WADE PAYNE / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Joshua Dobbs	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	6	130.5	112-177-6	63.3	1206	9	201.0

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Jalen Hurd	13	190	899	4.7	5	69.2

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Pig Howard	13	54	618	11.4	1	47.5

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jalen Reeves-Maybin	13	63	38	101

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Curt Maggitt	13	11.0	56

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Todd Kelly Jr.	3	21	7.0	0
Cameron Sutton	3	-1	-0.3	0

BEHIND THE COLLAR

Blue Smokey was the last blue tick coonhound introduced during a 1953 halftime contest to name the Volunteer mascot. When his name was called, the hound threw his head back and barked, causing the crowd to cheer—and giving Tennessee **"Smokey"** in the process.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	TENN	OPP
SCORING	376	315
Points Per Game	28.9	24.2
FIRST DOWNS	277	244
Rushing	118	120
Passing	139	110
Penalty	20	14
RUSHING YARDAGE	1903	2189
Yards gained rushing	2344	2558
Yards lost rushing	441	369
Rushing Attempts	524	515
Average Per Rush	3.6	4.3
Average Per Game	146.4	168.4
TDs Rushing	20	23
PASSING YARDAGE	2914	2551
Comp-Att-Int	281-453-14	201-377-16
Average Per Pass	6.4	6.8
Average Per Catch	10.4	12.7
Average Per Game	224.2	196.2
TDs Passing	23	16
TOTAL OFFENSE	4817	4740
Total Plays	977	892
Average Per Play	4.9	5.3
Average Per Game	370.5	364.6
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	34-817	54-1016
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	22-213	22-71
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	16-157	14-163
KICK RETURN AVG.	24.0	18.8
PUNT RETURN AVG.	9.7	3.2
INT RETURN AVG.	9.8	11.6
FUMBLES-LOST	18-8	19-8
PENALTIES-YARDS	54-444	78-620
Average Per Game	34.2	47.7
PUNTS-YARDS	80-3378	84-3454
Average Per Punt	42.2	41.1
Net punt average	38.6	38.1
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:14	29:46
3RD-DOWN CONV.	81/208	65/189
3rd-Down Pct.	39%	34%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	7/12	6/15
4th-Down Pct.	58%	40%
SACKS BY-YARDS	35-188	43-305
MISC YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	45	41
FG-ATTEMPTS	20-26	11-17
ATTENDANCE	698276	362690
Games/Avg Per Game	7/99754	5/72538
Neutral Site Games		1/56310

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Tennessee	96	128	75	74	3	376
Opponent	63	91	51	110	0	315

5-YEAR RECORD 28-34

DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Joshua Dobbs (6-3, 212, Jr.)
	Quinten Dormady (6-4, 213, Fr.)
RB	Jalen Hurd (6-3, 230, So.)
	Alvin Kamara (5-11, 210, So.)
LT	Kyler Kerbyson (6-4, 317, Sr.)
	Drew Richmond (6-5, 323, Fr.)
LG	Marcus Jackson (6-2, 308, Sr.)
	Brett Kendrick (6-6, 308, So.)
C	Mack Crowder (6-2, 290, Sr.)
	Coleman Thomas (6-6, 308, So.)
RG	Jashon Robertson (6-3, 310, So.)
	Austin Sanders (6-5, 307, So.)
RT	Dontavius Blair (6-8, 295, Jr.)
	Drew Richmond (6-5, 323, Fr.)
TE	Ethan Wolf (6-5, 240, So.)
	Alex Ellis (6-4, 236, Sr.)
WR	Marquez North (6-4, 224, Jr.)
	Jason Croom (6-5, 235, Jr.)
WR	Pig Howard (5-8, 187, Sr.)
	Josh Smith (6-1, 205, So.)
WR	Von Pearson (6-3, 187, Sr.)
	Josh Malone (6-3, 198, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Corey Vereen (6-2, 253, Jr.)
	Kyle Phillips (6-4, 255, Fr.)
DT	Kahlil McKenzie (6-4, 340, Fr.)
	Owen Williams (6-2, 295, Sr.)
DT	Danny O'Brien (6-2, 282, Jr.)
	Shy Tuttle (6-3, 315, Fr.)
DE	Derek Barnett (6-3, 268, So.)
	LaTroy Lewis (6-4, 260, Jr.)
OLB	Curt Maggitt (6-3, 246, Sr.)
	Chris Weatherd (6-4, 217, Sr.)
MLB	Jakob Johnson (6-4, 240, So.)
	Dillon Bates (6-3, 225, Fr.)
OLB	Jalen Reeves-Maybin (6-1, 225, Jr.)
	Cortez McDowell (6-1, 227, So.)
CB	Cameron Sutton (6-1, 189, Jr.)
	Justin Martin (6-2, 192, Jr.)
CB	Emmanuel Moseley (5-11, 175, So.)
	Rashaan Gaulden (6-1, 184, So.)
FS	Brian Randolph (6-0, 208, Sr.)
	Todd Kelly Jr. (6-0, 208, So.)
SS	LaDarrell McNeil (6-1, 206, Sr.)
	Evan Berry (5-11, 208, So.)

SPECIALISTS

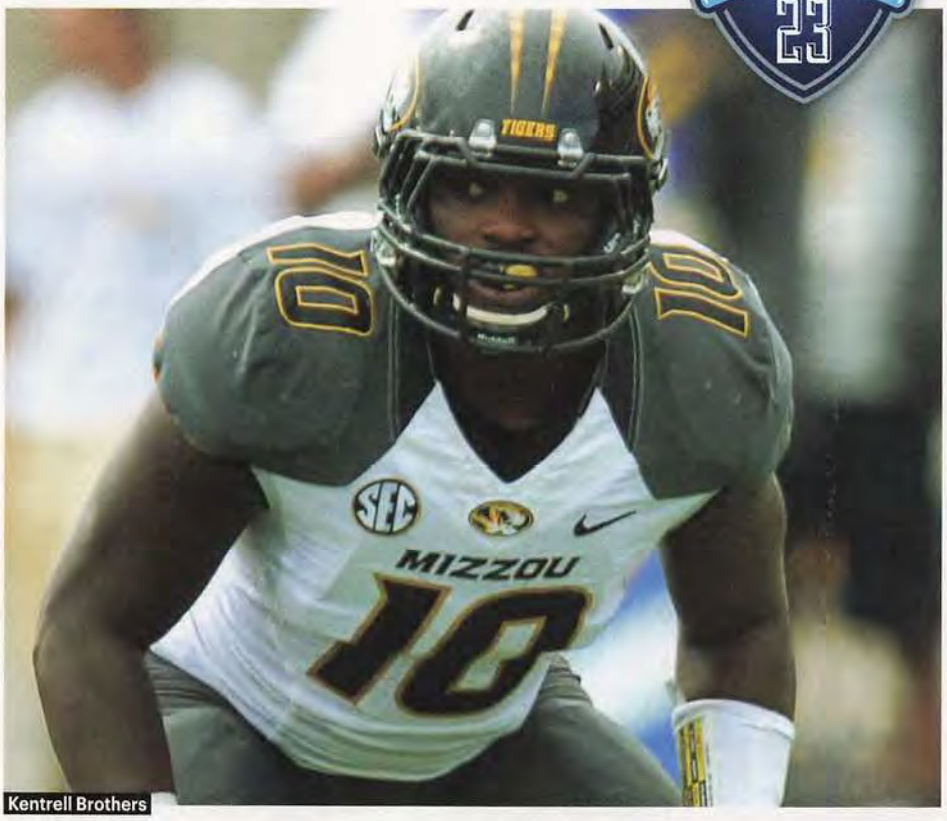
K	Aaron Medley (6-2, 189, So.)
P	Tommy Townsend (6-1, 175, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

MISSOURI
TIGERS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 23

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 3



Kentrell Brothers

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Southeast Missouri State	
S.12	@ARKANSAS STATE	
S.19	Connecticut	
S.26	@KENTUCKY	20-10
O.3	South Carolina	21-20
O.10	Florida	42-13
O.17	@GEORGIA	0-34
O.24	@VANDERBILT	24-14
N.5	Mississippi State	
N.14	BYU (at Kansas City, MO)	
N.21	Tennessee	29-21
N.28	@ARKANSAS	21-14

COACH
Gary Pinkel
15th year (113-66)
Career record: 186-103-3

Offensive coordinator: Josh Henson (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Barry Odom (first year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 11-3
(Beat Minnesota in the Citrus Bowl, 33-17)
Stadium: Faurot Field (71,168)
Tickets: 800-CAT-PAWS
Site: Columbia, Mo.
Website: mutigers.com
Twitter: @MizzouFootball

One division title could be written off as good fortune.

Two is definitely a trend.

What would three be? Whatever you'd call it, the Missouri Tigers would be delighted to find out.

Mizzou stepped into the SEC East power vacuum left by Florida, Tennessee and, last year, South Carolina, to win back to back division crowns.

It was an achievement that seemed unthinkable after Missouri went 5-7 in its first SEC season. Now the Tigers are back for more after an 11-3 season that ended with a Citrus Bowl win over Minnesota, still lurking, waiting for the other contenders to slip up.

Contending starts with a good quarterback, and Mizzou has one in junior Maty Mauk. He's started 17 games over the past two seasons, completing 221 of 414 passes in 2014 for 2,648 yards with 25 touchdowns and 13 interceptions.

The interior of the offensive line is formidable, featuring a pair of All-SEC candidates. Senior center Evan Boehm has started every game of his career and comprises an impressive tandem with right guard Connor McGovern. Meanwhile, last year's starting right tackle, Taylor Chappell, slides over to the left to replace Mitch Morse. The biggest concern is at right tackle, where seldom-used Clay Rhodes takes over.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Kentrell Brothers, LB

The 6-1, 235-pound Brothers earned a reputation as a tackling machine prior to 2014. But he was out of sync at the beginning of last season and was admittedly not playing at the level he desired. That is, until the SEC season, when Brothers averaged more than nine tackles per game in conference play and finished 2014 with 122 tackles, second most among league defenders.

Russell Hansbrough is the SEC's fifth-leading returning rusher with 1,084 yards and 10 TDs and the team's second-leading returning receiver behind tight end Sean Culkin with 11 catches for 58 yards (Culkin had 20 catches for 174 yards and a TD).

Their receiving stats aren't necessarily a good sign for the Tigers, who lost their top four receivers from 2014 including three productive seniors. Mizzou is basically starting over from scratch at the wide receiver position, with sophomore Nate Brown (5 catches, 45 yards)

BROTHERS: DAVID RICHARD / AP

the top returner of the group. He missed part of the spring with an ACL sprain but was expected to make a healthy recovery. Another receiver, redshirt freshman Keyon Dilosa, is returning from a torn Achilles' tendon.

Gary Pinkel's staff is noted for its continuity, so for Missouri to be breaking in two new assistants in the same season is big news. New defensive coordinator Barry Odom is a familiar face, serving as Mizzou's safeties coach from 2009-11 before spending three seasons as defensive coordinator at Memphis. Ryan Walters is also aboard as safeties coach after a season at Memphis under Odom as cornerbacks coach.

With All-SEC defensive end Shane Ray leaving early for the pros, Missouri will be without a senior defensive lineman for the first time ever under Pinkel. Ray teamed with fellow All-SEC end Markus Golden for 143 tackles (including 24.5 sacks).

Charles Harris and Marcus Loud, Ray and Golden's understudies, are primed to take over. Harris had 19 tackles and two sacks last season, while Loud had 14 tackles and half a sack. There is still an All-SEC-caliber performer anchoring the middle of the Mizzou line in defensive tackle Harold Brantley (54 tackles, 5 sacks).

The linebacker corps couldn't be in better shape thanks to weakside and middle linebackers Kentrell Brothers and Michael Scherer, Nos. 2 and 3 among SEC returning tacklers with 122 and 114 stops, respectively. The secondary is also experienced, led by cornerback Kenya Dennis (61 tackles). Strong safety Cortland Browning missed part of the spring because of foot surgery.

Andrew Baggett returns for his senior campaign, having made 18 of 25 field-goal attempts last year and 43 of 45 extra points. As soon as freshman Corey Fatony arrives, he'll be penciled in as Mizzou's starting punter.

BOTTOM LINE

In the hard-to-handicap SEC East, the Tigers may be the most dependable team of all. With a veteran quarterback among its loads of championship experience, don't expect Missouri to fade quietly. The Tigers could be 6-0 on Oct. 17 when they invade Georgia for what could be a showdown for SEC East supremacy. If Mizzou wins in Athens, well ... three-peat, anyone?

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Terry Beckner, OT ★★★★★
2. Drew Lock, QB ★★★★
3. Chase Abbington, RB ★★★★

Coming off back-to-back SEC East titles, the Tigers were able to land their highest-ranked recruiting class since joining the league (No. 25 per 247Sports), but that really doesn't matter as this staff has proven it can evaluate and develop with the best of them. Terry Beckner could have a Sheldon Richardson-type of impact. Drew Lock is Mizzou's quarterback of the future. Junior-college offensive tackle Malik Cuellar arrived from the City College of San Francisco for spring ball and was ascending the depth chart. If you want a classic Missouri sleeper, look no further than athletic 6-7 athletic wideout Justin Smith from West Laurens High in Dublin, Ga., one of the great late steals in the cycle nationally.

MASCOT: L.G. PATTERSON / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Maty Mauk	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	14	120.8	221-414-13	53.4	2648	25	189.1

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Russell Hansbrough	14	205	1084	5.3	10	77.4

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Sean Culkin	14	20	174	8.7	1	12.4

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Kentrell Brothers	14	62	60	122

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Harold Brantley	14	5.0	48

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Aarion Penton	3	38	12.7	0

BEHIND THE MASK

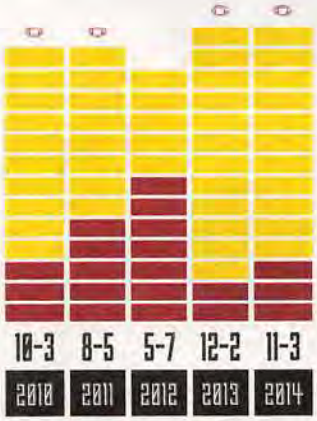
Even though Missouri's football team has been known as the Tigers since 1890, it wasn't until 1984 that **Truman the Tiger** was named—after Missouri-born President Harry S. Truman.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	MIZZOU	OPP
SCORING	389	295
Points Per Game	27.8	21.1
FIRST DOWNS	270	275
Rushing	129	113
Passing	122	137
Penalty	19	25
RUSHING YARDAGE	2490	1872
Yards gained rushing	2835	2338
Yards lost rushing	345	466
Rushing Attempts	539	531
Average Per Rush	4.6	3.5
Average Per Game	177.9	133.7
TDs Rushing	17	18
PASSING YARDAGE	2648	2978
Comp-Att-Int	221-415-13	288-474-12
Average Per Pass	6.4	6.3
Average Per Catch	12.0	10.3
Average Per Game	189.1	212.7
TDs Passing	25	18
TOTAL OFFENSE	5138	4850
Total Plays	954	1005
Average Per Play	5.4	4.8
Average Per Game	367.0	346.4
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	26-641	34-845
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	27-281	22-175
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-197	13-116
KICK RETURN AVG.	24.7	24.9
PUNT RETURN AVG.	10.4	8.0
INT RETURN AVG.	16.4	8.9
FUMBLES-LOST	10-3	32-13
PENALTIES-YARDS	102-815	83-666
Average Per Game	58.2	47.6
PUNTS-YARDS	75-3084	83-3437
Average Per Punt	41.1	41.4
Net punt average	38.5	36.3
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:00	31:00
3RD-DOWN CONV.	93/217	81/219
3rd-Down Pct.	43%	37%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	13/16	12/23
4th-Down Pct.	81%	52%
SACKS BY-YARDS	44-294	23-177
MISC YARDS	-4	0
TDS SCORED	48	36
FG-ATTEMPTS	18-25	14-18
ATTENDANCE	456996	397383
Games/Avg Per Game	7/65285	5/79477
Neutral Site Games		2/61075

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Missouri	83	86	110	110	0	389
Opponent	60	92	63	80	0	295

5-YEAR RECORD 46-20



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Maty Mauk (6-0, 200, Jr.)
	Eddie Printz (6-3, 205, So.)
RB	Russell Hansbrough (5-9, 195, Sr.)
	Ish Witter (5-10, 190, So.)
LT	Taylor Chappell (6-5, 305, Sr.)
	Paul Adams (6-6, 290, Fr.)
LG	Mitch Hall (6-5, 310, Sr.)
	Kevin Pendleton (6-4, 315, Fr.)
C	Evan Boehm (6-3, 320, Sr.)
	Alec Abeln (6-3, 290, So.)
RG	Connor McGovern (6-4, 300, Sr.)
	Jordan Williams (6-3, 290, Jr.)
RT	Clay Rhodes (6-5, 280, So.)
	Nate Crawford (6-5, 290, So.)
TE	Sean Culkin (6-6, 245, Jr.)
	Jason Reese (6-5, 250, So.)
WR	J'mon Moore (6-3, 190, So.)
	Eric Laurent (6-3, 215, Jr.)
WR	Nate Brown (6-3, 205, So.)
	Thomas Richard (6-1, 190, Fr.)
WR	Wesley Leftwich (6-1, 205, Sr.)
	Keyon Dilosa (6-3, 200, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Charles Harris (6-3, 255, So.)
	Spencer Williams (6-3, 245, Fr.)
DT	Harold Brantley (6-3, 280, Jr.)
	Rickey Hatley (6-4, 285, Jr.)
NG	Josh Augusta (6-4, 335, Jr.)
	Evan Winston (6-3, 300, Jr.)
DE	Marcus Loud (6-4, 260, So.)
	Rocel McWilliams (6-2, 240, Fr.)
OLB	Kentrell Brothers (6-1, 235, Sr.)
	Joey Burkett (6-2, 210, So.)
MLB	Michael Scherer (6-3, 235, Jr.)
	Eric Beisel (6-3, 225, So.)
OLB	Donavin Newsom (6-2, 230, Jr.)
	Clarence Green (6-0, 220, Sr.)
CB	Kenya Dennis (5-11, 200, Sr.)
	David Johnson (5-11, 195, Sr.)
CB	Aarion Penton (5-10, 190, Jr.)
	John Gibson (6-0, 190, Jr.)
FS	Ian Simon (6-0, 195, Sr.)
	Thomas Wilson (5-10, 190, So.)
SS	Cortland Browning (6-1, 205, Sr.)
	Anthony Sherrils (6-0, 190, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Andrew Baggett (6-1, 215, Sr.)
P	Corey Fatony (5-11, 185, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

FLORIDA
GATORS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **4**

Treon Harris

There's a new coach in Gainesville, a familiar face that Florida fans hope will have them reacquainted with big-time winning very soon.

Former Alabama offensive coordinator Jim McElwain, who nearly steered Colorado State last season into a CFP bowl berth as the Rams head coach, replaces Will Muschamp. His charge: return offensive excitement to the program once known for its Fun 'N' Gun attack and restore the Gators to contender status in the SEC East.

McElwain brought in Doug Nussmeier to do the offensive play calling, but both will collaborate. First job: name a starting quarterback. Sophomore Treon Harris is the only signal caller with any experience (55 of 111 passing, 1,019 yards, 9 touchdowns, 4 interceptions), but redshirt freshman Will Grier will be in play.

Kelvin Taylor (116 carries, 565 yards, 6 TDs) should start at tailback though Adam Lane was MVP of the Gators' Birmingham Bowl win over East Carolina. The question is who will block for them. Florida returns just eight scholarship linemen, with center Trip Thurman and right tackle Roderick Johnson the only ones who played significant snaps. Six O-line recruits signed in February, led by the nation's No. 1 offensive tackle, Martez Ivey, and they will have to grow up quickly.

Defensively the Gators were respectable up front in 2014, third in the SEC allowing just 116.2 rushing yards per game.

Geoff Collins comes to Florida from Mississippi State to run an aggressive, attacking defense that returns some shiny pieces but lacks depth. The linebacker corps is thin aside from middle linebacker Antonio Morrison (101 tackles in 2014). The secondary is anchored by All-American cornerback Vernon Hargreaves III (50 tackles, 3 interceptions), while Bryan Cox Jr. and Alex McCalister try to fill the cleats of projected top-five draft pick Dante Fowler Jr. at defensive end.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Treon Harris, QB

As a freshman last year, Harris gained instant fame when he took over for starter Jeff Driskel in an October game against Tennessee and led the Gators to a 10-9 comeback win. He replaced Driskel again in the fourth quarter against Missouri two weeks later to prevent a shutout in a 42-13 loss. Harris, who finished the season as the starter, has the poise and athleticism to help the Gators turn things around on offense.

BOTTOM LINE

Optimism will run high in Gainesville because of McElwain's arrival, but just about any change would pay offensive dividends and excite the faithful. Unfortunately there are too many issues at O-line, running back and linebacker to allow Florida to challenge for the division title. A bowl, any bowl, is a worthy goal.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	New Mexico State	
S.12	East Carolina	28-20
S.19	@KENTUCKY	36-30
S.26	Tennessee	10-9
O.3	Ole Miss	
O.10	@MISSOURI	13-42
O.17	@LSU	27-30
O.31	Georgia (at Jacksonville, FL)	38-20
N.7	Vanderbilt	34-10
N.14	@SOUTH CAROLINA	20-23
N.21	Florida Atlantic	
N.28	Florida State	19-24

COACH

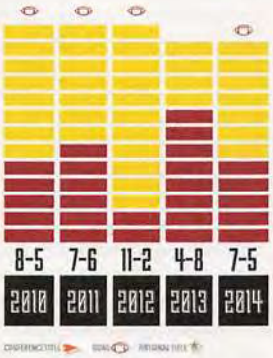
Jim McElwain
First year
Career record: 22-17

Offensive coordinator: Doug Nussmeier (first year)
Defensive coordinators: Geoff Collins (first year)
Randy Shannon (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-5
(Beat East Carolina in the Birmingham Bowl, 28-20)
Stadium: Ben Hill Griffin Stadium (88,548)
Tickets: 800-344-2867
Site: Gainesville, Fla.
Website: gatorzone.com
Twitter: @GatorZoneFB

5-YEAR RECORD 37-26



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Treon Harris (5-11, 193, So.)
RB	Kelvin Taylor (5-10, 209, Jr.)
LT	David Sharpe (6-6, 350, So.)
LG	Andrew Mike (6-6, 302, Fr.)
C	Trip Thurman (6-5, 310, Sr.)
RG	Antonio Riles (6-4, 312, So.)
RT	Roderick Johnson (6-6, 296, So.)
TE	Jake McGee (6-6, 243, Sr.)
WR	Demarcus Robinson (6-2, 197, Jr.)
WR	Ahmad Fulwood (6-4, 208, Jr.)
WR	Valdez Showers (6-0, 193, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Bryan Cox Jr. (6-3, 261, Jr.)
DT	Jonathan Bullard (6-3, 277, Sr.)
DT	Caleb Brantley (6-2, 319, So.)
DE	Alex McCalister (6-6, 238, Jr.)
OLB	Jarrad Davis (6-2, 229, Jr.)
MLB	Antonio Morrison (6-1, 225, Sr.)
OLB	Alex Anzalone (6-3, 234, Jr.)
CB	Vernon Hargreaves III (5-11, 198, Jr.)
CB	Quincy Wilson (6-1, 209, So.)
S	Keanu Neal (6-1, 209, Jr.)
S	Marcus Maye (6-0, 205, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Austin Hardin (5-10, 205, Jr.)
P	Johnny Townsend (6-1, 198, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES (247 STAR RATING)

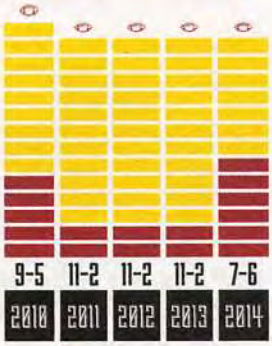
1. **Martez Ivey,** OT ★★★★★
2. **CeCe Jefferson,** DE ★★★★★
3. **Jordan Scarlett,** RB ★★★★

New coach Jim McElwain did an admirable job in a short amount of time, holding off Auburn for Martez Ivey and Ole Miss, Alabama and Auburn for CeCe Jefferson, both longtime Florida leans. Jordan Scarlett is an elite rushing prospect who could see the field early for the Gators, who also landed four-star south Florida running back Jordan Cronkrite, who was once committed to Miami. Late-rising cornerback Chris Williamson, from Gainesville, Ga., is a 6-1 playmaker from the same high school that produced Clemson quarterback Deshaun Watson.

HARRIS: JOHN TALOLY/AP

SOUTH CAROLINA GAMECOCKS

5-YEAR RECORD 49-17



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Connor Mitch (6-3, 220, So.)
FB	Garrison Gist (5-10, 252, Sr.)
RB	Brandon Wilds (6-2, 224, Sr.)
LT	Mason Zandi (6-9, 313, Jr.)
LG	Cody Waldrop (6-2, 309, Jr.)
C	Alan Knott (6-4, 268, So.)
RG	Will Sport (6-5, 304, Sr.)
RT	Brandon Shell (6-6, 327, Sr.)
TE	Jerell Adams (6-6, 231, Sr.)
WR	Pharoh Cooper (5-11, 208, Jr.)
WR	Deebo Samuel (6-0, 206, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Gerald Dixon (6-2, 276, Jr.)
DT	Gerald Dixon Jr. (6-3, 325, Sr.)
DT	Phillip Dukes (6-3, 324, Sr.)
DE	Marquavius Lewis (6-3, 266, Jr.)
OLB	Jonathan Walton (6-0, 241, Jr.)
MLB	Skai Moore (6-2, 218, Jr.)
OLB	Jordan Diggs (6-0, 210, Jr.)
CB	Chris Lammons (5-10, 185, So.)
CB	Rico McWilliams (5-11, 188, Jr.)
FS	D.J. Smith (5-11, 194, So.)
SS	T.J. Gurley (5-10, 199, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Elliott Fry (6-0, 158, Jr.)
P	Sean Kelly (5-10, 201, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Marquavius Lewis, DE ★★★★
2. Shameik Blackshear, DE ★★★★
3. Dexter Wideman, DT ★★★★

It was all about adding personnel on the defensive line for the Gamecocks, who finished with the nation's No. 19 class. Marquavius Lewis, the No. 1 junior-college defensive end in the 2015 cycle per 247Sports, arrived for spring ball and was already listed as a starter and South Carolina's best defensive lineman. Dexter Wideman also participated in the spring and could push for a starting job this season. Four-star junior-college defensive end Dante Sawyer and two more jucos—Ulric Jones and Devante Covington—arrive this summer.

Skai Moore

MOORE: STEPHEN B. MORTON / AP

After four straight unprecedented seasons of 42 combined wins from 2010-13, there's a fear among South Carolina's faithful that last year's 7-6 record is a sign that the chickens of the program's lesser nature have come back to roost.

Pegged as an SEC East contender last season, South Carolina floundered because of its defense, finishing 13th in the conference in yards (432.7 ypg) and 12th in points allowed (30.4).

Steve Spurrier, who turned 70 in April, returned after some consideration, though how long he remains will be a question. For this season at least, the Head Ball Coach brought reinforcements. He retained defensive coordinator Lorenzo Ward, but made him co-coordinator with Jon Hoke, his last defensive coordinator at Florida. Hoke will call the formations, though it remains to be decided if that will be his traditional 4-3 or the Gamecocks' traditional 4-2-5.

Eight early enrollees also rolled into Columbia in January, a high-water mark for the Spurrier era. That includes junior college transfer Marquavius Lewis, expected to claim a starting defensive end spot opposite Gerald Dixon (and his brother, Gerald Dixon Jr., at tackle).

Like so many SEC teams, the Gamecocks face quarterback issues. Sophomore Connor Mitch looks the part of the starter, though he threw just six passes last season. Freshman Lorenzo Nunez could give him a push come August.

The skill positions are well stocked, with exciting All-SEC receiver Pharoh Cooper catching passes and punts (and occasionally playing Wildcat quarterback). Cooper caught 69 passes for 1,136 yards and nine touchdowns last season, while Brandon Wilds returns after rushing for 570 yards and four TDs in 2014.

Depth on the offensive line was a spring concern but should eventually be resolved. Brandon Shell, the returning starter at right tackle, underwent spring shoulder surgery but should be healthy by fall.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Skai Moore, LB

In 2013, Moore led the Gamecocks in tackles (56) and interceptions (4) despite starting only four games. He had a repeat performance last season with a team-leading 93 tackles and three picks in nine starts. Moore plays with added motivation, having not been recruited by his hometown Miami Hurricanes until Signing Day in 2013 when it was too late. He paid them back with 11 tackles in last year's Duck Commander Independence Bowl, which USC won 24-21.

BOTTOM LINE

In the hard-to-handicap SEC East, South Carolina looks like a mid-pack entry. Since the defense should be better, the Gamecocks will again win more than they lose, but not enough to propel them to the top of the division. A plus-.500 regular season is an attainable goal, but not much more.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **5**

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.3	North Carolina (at Charlotte, NC)	
S.12	Kentucky	38-45
S.19	@GEORGIA	38-35
S.26	UCF	
O.3	@MISSOURI	20-21
O.10	LSU	
O.17	Vanderbilt	48-34
O.31	@TEXAS A&M	28-52
N.7	@TENNESSEE	42-45
N.14	Florida	23-20
N.21	Citadel	
N.28	Clemson	17-35

COACH

Steve Spurrier
11th year (84-45)
Career record: 226-85-2

Offensive coordinators:
Shawn Elliott (fourth year)
Steve Spurrier Jr. (fourth year)
Defensive coordinators:
Lorenzo Ward (fourth year)
and Jon Hoke (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat Miami in the Independence Bowl, 24-21)
Stadium: Williams-Brice Stadium (80,250)
Tickets: 800-4SC-FANS
Site: Columbia, S.C.
Website: gamecocksonline.com
Twitter: @GamecockFB

KENTUCKY
WILDCATS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **6**

Josh Forrest

The cheers for basketball have the volume to drown out everything else involving Kentucky athletics, but when the decibels finally die down another sound can be heard:

The sound of a football program being built.

Kentucky has gone all in for football, with a $120 million renovation of Commonwealth Stadium set to debut this fall and a $45 million practice facility opening next door in 2016.

Kentucky marched down the road to relevance in 2014 with a promising 5-1 start under second-year coach Mark Stoops. Then came a sobering 41-3 loss at LSU followed by five more losses, leaving the Wildcats a game short of their bowl goal.

Now in 2015, a year more experienced and infused by the best three-year recruiting run in program history, Kentucky is ready to be known for something other than basketball.

Respectability rides on the right arm of junior quarterback Patrick Towles, who threw 10 touchdowns and four interceptions during the first six games of 2014, but only four touchdowns with five interceptions in the last six.

New offensive coordinator Shannon Dawson arrives from pass happy West Virginia, tasked with making Towles more consistent while devoted to a more balanced attack. Stanley "Boom" Williams (486 yards rushing, 5 TDs) and Jojo Kemp (323 yards, 4 TDs) return to lead the ground game. Ryan Timmons (45 catches, 536 yards, 2 TDs) is also back at receiver while freshman C.J. Conrad enrolled early and should start at tight end.

Kentucky's defense gave up 407 yards per game last season but returns seven players who started six or more games. Middle linebacker Josh Forrest is the SEC's top returning tackler with 110 stops (9.2 per game). Strong safety A.J. Stamps had 56 tackles and four interceptions, more than UK had in all of 2013.

BOTTOM LINE

It's time for Stoops' program to take a step forward. No one is expecting national championship-level results. This isn't basketball. But at least a bowl appearance, UK's first since the 2010 season, is a must have. This team can get there, but it's going to need to get at least three SEC wins.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Josh Forrest, LB

At 6-3 and 233 pounds, Forrest was actually the smallest member of the Wildcats' front-seven rotation, which allowed him to make plays while the bigger fellows took on blocks. Forrest had a team-leading 110 tackles and snagged two interceptions, one of which he returned for a touchdown against Louisianna-Monroe. That score gave Kentucky its first lead of the game at 17-14 and the Wildcats went on to win 48-14. With three defensive linemen having graduated, Forrest may have to make such game changing plays with less quality protection.

SEC – East

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Louisiana	
S.12	@SOUTH CAROLINA	45-38
S.19	Florida	30-36
S.26	Missouri	10-20
O.3	Eastern Kentucky	
O.15	Auburn	
O.24	@MISSISSIPPI STATE	31-45
O.31	Tennessee	16-50
N.7	@GEORGIA	31-63
N.14	@VANDERBILT	17-7
N.21	Charlotte	
N.28	Louisville	40-44

COACH

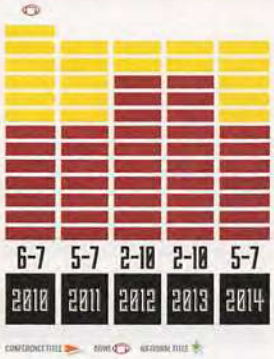
Mark Stoops
Third year (7-17)
Career record: 7-17

Offensive coordinator: Shannon Dawson (first year)
Defensive coordinator: D.J. Eliot (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 5-7
Stadium: Commonwealth Stadium (61,000)
Tickets: 800-928-2287
Site: Lexington, Ky.
Website: ukathletics.com
Twitter: @UKFootball

5-YEAR RECORD 20-41



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Patrick Towles (6-5, 241, Jr.)
RB	Stanley Williams (5-9, 196, So.)
LT	Jordan Swindle (6-7, 309, Sr.)
LG	Zach West (6-4, 312, Sr.)
C	Jon Toth (6-5, 295, Jr.)
RG	Ramsey Meyers (6-4, 323, So.)
RT	Kyle Meadows (6-5, 285, So.)
TE	C.J. Conrad (6-5, 245, Fr.)
WR	Jeff Badet (6-0, 176, So.)
WR	Ryan Timmons (5-10, 201, Jr.)
WR	Garrett Johnson (5-11, 174, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Farrington Huguenin (6-4, 272, Sr.)
DT	Melvin Lewis (6-4, 342, Sr.)
DT	C.J. Johnson (6-3, 297, Sr.)
DE	Jason Hatcher (6-3, 249, Jr.)
MLB	Josh Forrest (6-3, 233, Sr.)
OLB	Ryan Flannigan (6-2, 220, Sr.)
CB	Blake McClain (5-11, 199, Jr.)
CB	Cody Quinn (5-10, 174, Sr.)
CB	Fred Tiller (6-0, 177, Sr.)
FS	Marcus McWilson (6-0, 202, Jr.)
SS	A.J. Stamps (6-0, 197, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Austin MacGinnis (5-10, 175, So.)
P	Landon Foster (6-1, 178, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES (247 STAR RATING)

1. **Eli Brown,** LB ★★★★
2. **C.J. Conrad,** TE ★★★★
3. **Courtney Miggins,** DT ★★★

This Kentucky class ranked No. 13 in the conference and featured another strong contingent from the state of Ohio as five Buckeye State prospects, including C.J. Conrad, who enrolled early and could push for time this year at tight end, inked with the Wildcats. Eli Brown is a 6-2, 200-pound in-state linebacker who will make an impact on the Kentucky defense, perhaps as early as this season. A pair of Washington, D.C., prospects—6-4 wide receiver Jabari Greenwood of Gonzaga and offensive tackle Levon Livingston of Ballou—were big steals.

FORREST: DAVID STEPHENSON / AP

VANDERBILT COMMODORES

5-YEAR RECORD 29-34

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Johnny McCrary (6-4, 224, So.)
FB	Ladarius Banks (6-2, 270, So.)
RB	Ralph Webb (5-10, 200, So.)
LT	Andrew Jelks (6-6, 305, Jr.)
LG	Jake Bernstein (6-4, 312, Sr.)
C	Spencer Pulley (6-4, 300, Jr.)
RG	Delando Crooks (6-5, 312, So.)
RT	Will Holden (6-7, 312, Jr.)
TE	Steven Scheu (6-5, 245, Sr.)
WR	C.J. Duncan (5-11, 200, So.)
WR	Latevius Rayford (6-1, 192, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Caleb Azubike (6-4, 270, Sr.)
NT	Nifae Lealao (6-5, 320, So.)
DE	Adam Butler (6-5, 305, Jr.)
OLB	Stephen Weatherly (6-5, 250, Jr.)
ILB	Nigel Bowden (6-1, 245, So.)
ILB	Zach Cunningham (6-4, 234, So.)
OLB	Jonathan Wynn (6-4, 248, So.)
CB	Torren McGaster (6-0, 196, Jr.)
CB	Taurean Ferguson (5-9, 185, So.)
FS	Oren Burks (6-3, 212, So.)
SS	Jahmel McIntosh (6-1, 200, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Tommy Openshaw (6-2, 185, So.)
P	Colby Cooke (6-3, 220, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Josh Smith, LB ★★★★
2. Donovan Sheffield, CB ★★★★
3. Kyle Shurmur, QB ★★★★

The Commodores signed only 18 prospects but have some impact players in Smith, the No. 3 inside-linebacker prospect in the cycle per 247Sports Composite rankings, and Donovan Sheffield—both local products of the Nashville area. The quarterback of the future arrives in Kyle Shurmur, who is a polished 6-4 pocket passer from Pennsylvania. Vanderbilt also added a juco transfer, defensive end Nehemiah Mitchell from City College of San Francisco, in time for spring. The 6-5, 265-pounder has the big, athletic body needed for Vandy's defensive scheme.

Stephen Weatherly

WEATHERLY: MARK HUMPHREY / AP

One year in Nashville and Vanderbilt coach Derek Mason is already under fire.

Taking over the Commodores after James Franklin led them to back-to-back nine-win seasons, Mason's first campaign was a step backward. Vandy went just 3-9 (0-8 SEC), two of those wins coming by a combined four points over Massachusetts and Charleston Southern, the latter an FCS team.

The offense was one of the worst in the FBS, ranking 122nd of 125 schools in total yards, while struggling to find an identity behind one of four starting quarterbacks, the most in the FBS. In December, Mason jettisoned four coaches, including offensive coordinator Karl Dorrell and defensive coordinator David Kotulski.

Mason decided to compartmentalize. He brought in former Wisconsin offensive coordinator Andy Ludwig, giving him full reign of the play calling and choice of a starting quarterback.

Mason decided not to hire a new a defensive coordinator but run the unit as he did as defensive coordinator at Stanford. Linebackers coach Kenwick Thompson will have an elevated role with the defense, but final decisions will be Mason's.

Ludwig spent the spring trying to decide between his two most-experienced quarterbacks, sophomore Johnny McCrary (985 yards, 9 touchdowns, 8 interceptions) and junior Patton Robinette (454 yards, 3 TDs, 3 INTs). Ludwig's decision was made easier after Robinette retired in late March due to concussion issues. McCrary will have All-SEC caliber tight end Steven Scheu (39 catches, 525 yards, 4 TDs) to throw to again, while Ralph Webb (912 yards, 4 TDs) returns as an underrated tailback.

Defensively, the Commodores will complete a transition started last year from a 4-3 to a 3-4, with Mason preaching a more attacking, risk-reward approach. Vandy brings back its top six returning tacklers, led by inside linebackers Nigel Bowden and Zach Cunningham (78 and 67 tackles, respectively). Both kicking specialists, kicker Tommy Openshaw and punter Colby Cooke, also return.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Stephen Weatherly, LB

It would appear that Weatherly's 6-5, 250-pound frame enabled him to make his team leading 12.5 tackles for loss and 4.5 sacks last year. But it was most likely his two previous seasons developing in the program as a practice squad member in 2012 and reserve with limited playing time in 2013. With all that built up energy, Weatherly exploded when he finally got the opportunity to be a regular starter. In his last five games, he registered 10.5 tackles for loss, including five in the season closer, a 24-17 loss to Tennessee.

BOTTOM LINE

Mason has to show progress in Year Two, which means a winning record in the nonconference schedule and at least one or two SEC victories. Games at Middle Tennessee on Oct. 3 and Nov. 14 at home against Kentucky could be linchpins to Mason's job security.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

7

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Western Kentucky	
S.12	Georgia	17-44
S.19	Austin Peay	
S.26	@ OLE MISS	3-41
O.3	@ MIDDLE TENNESSEE	
O.17	@ SOUTH CAROLINA	34-48
O.24	Missouri	14-24
O.31	@ HOUSTON	
N.7	@ FLORIDA	10-34
N.14	Kentucky	7-17
N.21	Texas A&M	
N.28	@ TENNESSEE	17-24

COACH

Derek Mason
Second year (3-9)
Career record: 3-9

Offensive coordinator: Andy Ludwig (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Derek Mason (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: Vanderbilt Stadium (40,550)
Tickets: 615-322-GOLD
Site: Nashville
Website: vucommodores.com
Twitter: @VandyFootball

AUBURN
TIGERS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 3

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 1

Cassanova McKinzy

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Louisville (at Atlanta, GA)	
S.12	Jacksonville State	
S.19	@LSU	41-7
S.26	Mississippi State	23-38
O.3	San Jose State	59-13
O.15	@KENTUCKY	
O.24	@ARKANSAS	45-21
O.31	Ole Miss	35-31
N.7	@TEXAS A&M	38-41
N.14	Georgia	7-34
N.21	Idaho	
N.28	Alabama	44-55

COACH
Gus Malzahn
Third year (20-7)
Career record: 29-10

Offensive coordinators:
Rhett Lashlee (third year) and Dameyune Craig (third year)
Defensive coordinator:
Will Muschamp (first year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Wisconsin in the Outback Bowl, 34-31)
Stadium: Jordan-Hare Stadium (87,451)
Tickets: 855-282-2010
Site: Auburn, Ala.
Website: auburntigers.com
Twitter: @FootballAU

Auburn's roster is home to Gray King, Tyler Queen, Prince Tega Wanogho, D'haquille "Duke" Williams and Gimel President.

But are the Tigers truly deserving of being crowned SEC royalty, worthy of the title of the most powerful team in college football's most powerful conference?

The SEC's most mercurial program, Auburn has four seasons of 11 wins or more since 2004 and five seasons of five or more losses over that same span.

This year, despite coming off an 8-5 campaign and losing dependable quarterback Nick Marshall and the SEC's leading rusher in Cameron Artis-Payne, the Tigers are the pick to win the SEC West.

The main reason is the new man running the defense. Will Muschamp had a rocky tenure as head coach at Florida, going 28-21 in four seasons. But as soon as the Gators cut him loose, Muschamp became the most highly prized free agent coach in the conference.

South Carolina and Texas A&M were both interested in Muschamp, but Gus Malzahn enticed him back to Auburn (where he was defensive coordinator in 2006-07) for a reported $1.6 million per year.

Muschamp finds a defense that is a shadow of what he left at Auburn eight years ago. The Tigers ranked ninth in the SEC in total defense last season (398.8 ypg) and 10th in scoring defense (26.7 ppg). In its last seven FBS games, Auburn allowed 31 points or more–the worst stretch in school history.

Muschamp will run a base 4-3 with some 3-4 formations, a switch from Auburn's set 4-2-5 under Ellis Johnson with a hybrid Star position. Whatever the formation, Muschamp will have an excellent cornerstone to build around in junior defensive end Carl Lawson.

Lawson tore an ACL in spring practice last year and missed all of the 2014 season. But

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Cassanova McKinzy, LB

Wasn't Casanova a lover, not a fighter? Somebody give the memo to this guy. McKinzy has been exceptionally violent to opponents with a team-leading 166 tackles over the last two seasons. Having McKinzy in the middle of the field allows Auburn edge-rushers to attack quarterbacks liberally (107 team QB hurries in 2014), knowing that whatever gets by them won't get by him.

MCKINZY: DAVE MARTIN / AP

he's back and arguably better than ever, improving his 10-yard split time this spring from what it was a year earlier.

DaVonte Lambert (24 tackles, 10 QB hurries) mans the other end, backed up by President.

At linebacker, Cassanova McKinzy leads the charge with 91 tackles in the middle. Johnathan Ford, Auburn's leading tackler from 2014 with 93 stops and three interceptions, is back at the strong safety spot.

Graduation and the NFL hit Auburn hard on offense, where the Tigers lost their quarterback, top running back and three of their top five receivers.

There is a faction that believes Auburn will eventually be better at quarterback with Jeremy Johnson. Seen as a more accurate passer than Marshall, Johnson completed 75.7 percent of his passes (28 of 37) for 436 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions. Most of that came when he started the season opener against Arkansas, going 12-for-16 for 243 yards and two TDs as Marshall sat for a one-half suspension.

There's little question who Johnson's top target will be. Williams was far and away Auburn's go-to receiver last season, ranking third in the SEC with 73.0 receiving yards per game (45 catches, 730 yards, five TDs). More of a question lies at running back where Jovon Robinson is expected to have the inside track a year out of prep school over Roc Thomas (43 carries, 214 yards, 2 TDs).

Sophomore Daniel Carlson will again handle both kicking and punting duties. Carlson made 18 of 24 field goals and all 57 of his extra points, but Auburn was 12th in net punting (37.4 yards per punt).

BOTTOM LINE

There's a lot of dice rolling at Auburn. Fans are hoping Johnson will be an even better passer than Marshall, that the Tigers could actually be better at running back than they were with Artis-Payne, and most importantly that Muschamp will turn the Auburn defense into one that actually defends. If it all works out, Auburn will be the team to beat in the SEC West. Place your bets ...

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

The addition of former Florida head coach Will Muschamp to the Auburn staff as defensive coordinator—along with ace recruiter and Tigers alum Travaris Robinson, who worked under Muschamp with the Gators—paid huge dividends down the stretch as the Tigers finished with eight signees from the Sunshine State, including Byron Cowart, who was previously a Florida lean. Jovon Robinson, however, may be the name college football fans becomes familiar with first in this class. The Georgia Military College star returns to Auburn (he signed with the Tigers in the 2012 class before leaving) and is in contention to be the starting running back this season. He's talented enough to pile up the yardage right away. This class, which finished No. 9 in the country per 247Sports' rankings, also features 10 signees from Georgia, including speedy receiver Darius Slayton, whom the Tigers flipped late in the recruiting cycle from UGA.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Byron Cowart, DE ★★★★★
2. Kerryon Johnson, ATH ★★★★
3. Jovon Robinson, RB ★★★★

MASCOT: DAVE MARTIN/AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Jeremy Johnson	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	7	201.4	28-37-0	75.7	436	3	62.3

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Roc Thomas	12	43	214	5.0	2	17.8

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Duke Williams	10	45	730	16.2	5	73.0

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Johnathan Ford	13	62	31	93

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Kris Frost	13	3.5	29
DaVonte Lambert	11	3.5	13

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Jonathan Jones	6	6	1.0	0

BEHIND THE MASK

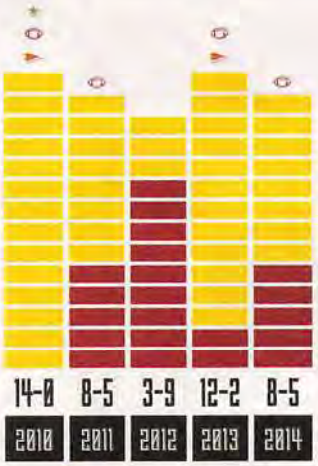
The War Eagle is traced back to the 1892 game against Georgia when a pet eagle broke free and soared over the field. The crowd began to chant "War Eagle!" as the Tigers marched to victory over the Bulldogs. **Nova** (War Eagle VII) has been flying around Jordan-Hare Stadium since 2006.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	AUBURN	OPP
SCORING	461	347
Points Per Game	35.5	26.7
FIRST DOWNS	314	287
Rushing	172	119
Passing	132	131
Penalty	10	37
RUSHING YARDAGE	3321	2194
Yards gained rushing	3544	2518
Yards lost rushing	223	324
Rushing Attempts	607	493
Average Per Rush	5.5	4.5
Average Per Game	255.5	168.8
TDs Rushing	32	22
PASSING YARDAGE	2984	2991
Comp-Att-Int	208-332-7	243-421-22
Average Per Pass	9.0	7.1
Average Per Catch	14.3	12.3
Average Per Game	229.5	230.1
TDs Passing	23	22
TOTAL OFFENSE	6305	5185
Total Plays	939	914
Average Per Play	6.7	5.7
Average Per Game	485.0	398.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	35-701	33-717
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	17-303	19-148
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	22-130	7-95
KICK RETURN AVG.	20.0	21.7
PUNT RETURN AVG.	17.8	7.8
INT RETURN AVG.	5.9	13.6
FUMBLES-LOST	18-13	22-5
PENALTIES-YARDS	92-896	57-467
Average Per Game	68.9	35.9
PUNTS-YARDS	52-2115	59-2427
Average Per Punt	40.7	41.1
Net punt average	37.4	35.3
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:53	30:07
3RD-DOWN CONV.	94/179	64/178
3rd-Down Pct.	53%	36%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	3/7	15/25
4th-Down Pct.	43%	60%
SACKS BY-YARDS	21-136	15-92
MISC YARDS	0	77
TDS SCORED	58	45
FG-ATTEMPTS	18-24	11-18
ATTENDANCE	612157	372648
Games/Avg Per Game	7/87451	5/74530
Neutral Site Games		1/44023

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Auburn	103	150	86	122	0	461
Opponent	98	103	71	72	3	347

5-YEAR RECORD 45-21



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Jeremy Johnson (6-5, 230, Jr.)
	Sean White (6-0, 200, Fr.)
RB	Jovon Robinson (6-0, 230, Jr.)
	Roc Thomas (5-10, 203, So.)
LT	Shon Coleman (6-6, 313, Jr.)
	Braden Smith (6-6, 286, So.)
LG	Alex Kozan (6-4, 300, Jr.)
	Devonte Danzey (6-2, 305, Sr.)
C	Austin Golson (6-5, 304, Jr.)
	Xavier Dampeer (6-2, 305, Sr.)
RG	Braden Smith (6-6, 286, So.)
	Avery Young (6-6, 305, Jr.)
RT	Avery Young (6-6, 305, Jr.)
	Robert Leff (6-6, 288, Jr.)
TE	Chandler Cox (6-1, 232, Fr.)
	Chris Laye (6-5, 249, Fr.)
WR	Tony Stevens (6-4, 201, Jr.)
	Marcus Davis (5-9, 180, Jr.)
WR	Duke Williams (6-2, 224, Sr.)
	Melvin Ray (6-3, 215, Sr.)
WR	Ricardo Louis (6-2, 215, Sr.)
	Melvin Ray (6-3, 215, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	DaVonte Lambert (6-2, 282, Sr.)
	Gimel President (6-4, 263, Jr.)
DT	Dontavius Russell (6-3, 295, Fr.)
	Devaroe Lawrence (6-2, 281, Jr.)
DT	Montravius Adams (6-4, 296, Jr.)
	Maurice Swain (6-5, 295, Jr.)
DE	Carl Lawson (6-2, 257, Jr.)
	Elijah Daniel (6-2, 282, Jr.)
OLB	Kris Frost (6-2, 240, Sr.)
	Justin Garrett (6-1, 228, Sr.)
MLB	Cassanova McKinzy (6-3, 253, Sr.)
	Cameron Toney (6-1, 243, So.)
OLB	Tre' Williams (6-2, 238, So.)
	JaViere Mitchell (6-2, 215, Jr.)
CB	Jonathan Jones (5-10, 181, Sr.)
	T.J. Davis (6-0, 200, Jr.)
CB	Joshua Holsey (5-11, 198, Sr.)
	Stephen Roberts (5-11, 187, So.)
SS	Johnathan Ford (6-0, 203, Jr.)
	Joshua Holsey (5-11, 198, Sr.)
FS	Tray Matthews (6-1, 203, So.)
	Markell Boston (6-0, 200, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Daniel Carlson (6-4, 213, So.)
P	Daniel Carlson (6-4, 213, So.)

Sporting News All-American

ALABAMA
CRIMSON TIDE

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

Derrick Henry

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Wisconsin (at Dallas, TX)	
S.12	Middle Tennessee	
S.19	Ole Miss	17-23
S.26	Louisiana-Monroe	
O.3	@GEORGIA	
O.10	Arkansas	14-13
O.17	@TEXAS A&M	59-0
O.24	Tennessee	34-20
N.7	LSU	20-13
N.14	@MISSISSIPPI STATE	25-20
N.21	Charleston Southern	
N.28	@AUBURN	55-44

COACH
Nick Saban
Ninth year (91-17)
Career record: 182-59-1
Offensive coordinator: Lane Kiffin (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Kirby Smart (eighth year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 12-2
(Lost to Ohio State in the Sugar Bowl, 42-35)
Stadium: Bryant-Denny Stadium (101,821)
Tickets: 205-348-BAMA
Site: Tuscaloosa, Ala.
Website: rolltide.com
Twitter: @AlabamaFTBL

Leading Ohio State 21-6 in the second quarter of January's Sugar Bowl, with a trip to the first CFP championship game in its grasp, Alabama became something rarely seen: Vulnerable.

Cardale Jones and Ezekiel Elliott shredded the Crimson Tide for 537 yards, including Elliott's decisive 85-yard touchdown burst right through Nick Saban's vaunted defense.

The 42-35 loss left Alabama no longer looking so invincible. The Crimson Tide won another national recruiting title in February, but Bama's gifted newcomers can't compensate for all the experience lost since that stunning night in New Orleans.

All-American wide receiver Amari Cooper and his 1,727 receiving yards is gone to the NFL. Same for T.J. Yeldon, half of a deadly 2,000-yard rushing duo with Derrick Henry, defensive secondary leader Landon Collins and quarterback Blake Sims, who led the SEC in passing efficiency.

Talent abides in Tuscaloosa as always under Saban, who in his ninth year is Alabama's longest-tenured coach since Bear Bryant.

But for the first time in years, the perennial king of the SEC hill has a hill to climb.

Jake Coker was expected to inherit the quarterback job in 2014 when he transferred from Florida State. He was beaten out by Sims and played just seven games, completing 38 of 59 passes for 403 yards and four touchdowns, but is a lock for the job this time.

Henry rushed for 990 yards last season, 11 more than Yeldon, but isn't an every-down back. Kenyan Drake (112 yards, 4 TDs) is on track to be the No. 2 back after Tyren Jones (224, 2) was suspended in the offseason.

Good hands still abound in the receiver corps, with sophomore ArDarius Stewart (12 catches, 149 yards) the best bet to blossom

DIFFERENCE-MAKER
Derrick Henry, RB

For the second straight offseason, they're breaking in a new starting quarterback in Tuscaloosa. What's more, nearly half of the offense left with wideout Amari Cooper and halfback T.J. Yeldon. The Tide still has the 6-3, 241-pound Henry, who smashed and dashed for 990 yards and 11 touchdowns in 2014. He'll continue the tradition of great Alabama running backs.

HENRY: DAVE MARTIN / AP

into the No. 1 receiver. Tight end O.J. Howard (17, 260) will also be a prime target. Cam Sims was battling for a starting wide receiver spot before tearing an ACL in spring practice, requiring surgery that put his sophomore season in jeopardy.

Alabama's strength will be along the line of scrimmage. Left tackle Cam Robinson is poised to make an All-American run, though center Ryan Kelly is the only other returning offensive starter. On the defensive line Brandon Ivory is gone, as is junior college transfer Jonathan Taylor, who was dismissed from the team in March. A'Shawn Robinson (49 tackles) is ready to earn All-SEC honors.

Reggie Ragland captains the linebacker squad as he is Bama's top returning tackler with 95 stops including 10.5 for losses. Highly regarded junior Reuben Foster takes over at the other inside linebacker spot for Trey Depriest. Outside linebacker Denzel Devall missed the spring after ankle surgery.

The secondary is in flux with the departure of Collins at strong safety and a hip injury that sidelined cornerback Cyrus Jones during the spring. Eddie Jackson and Tony Brown will duke it out for the other cornerback slot while Marlon Humphrey, son of Bama running back great Bobby Humphrey, backs up Jones.

Hootie Jones is set to take over for Collins at strong safety. Senior Geno Smith is expected back at free safety despite a DUI arrest in March.

Defensive coordinator Kirby Smart moved from safeties to inside linebackers after Kevin Steele left to be coordinator at LSU, while Tosh Lupoi took over outside linebackers when Lance Thompson left for Auburn. Mel Tucker, who worked under Saban at LSU, will coach the secondary.

On special teams, JK Scott averaged 48.0 yards per punt as an All-SEC freshman. Kicker Adam Griffith made only 12 of 19 field goal attempts while nailing 53 of 54 extra points.

BOTTOM LINE

Can you lose a 1,700-yard receiver, a 1,000-yard rusher and the SEC's most effective passer and hope to be as productive offensively? There's no question the Tide will be terrific in the trenches, but Bama is no automatic choice to win the SEC and earn a CFP spot this time.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

Alabama signed the nation's No. 1 recruiting class for the fifth straight recruiting cycle, an unprecedented run in college football's modern recruiting era. Seven players enrolled early. Look out for safety Ronnie Harrison (Tallahassee, Fla./University) to possibly make a move to play this season, as he was impressive during spring practice. Calvin Ridley, the No. 1 wideout recruit in the class of 2015 per the 247Sports Composite rankings, is a burner who could provide a big-play element early in his career. Alabama again cast a wide net, signing prospects from 12 different states, including the nation's No. 1 running back, Damien Harris, from Kentucky.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Calvin Ridley, WR ★★★★★
2. Kendal Sheffield, CB ★★★★★
3. Blake Barnett, QB ★★★★★

MASCOT: GERALD HERBERT / AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Jake Coker	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	7	144.2	38-59-0	64.4	403	4	57.6

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Derrick Henry	14	172	990	5.8	11	70.7

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
O.J. Howard	14	17	260	15.3	0	18.6

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Reggie Ragland	14	45	50	95

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Jonathan Allen	14	5.5	30

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Cyrus Jones	3	27	9.0	0

BEHIND THE MASK

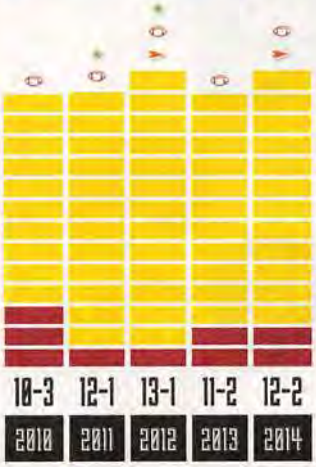
Sports writer Everett Strupper of the *Atlanta Journal* authored a story on the 1930 Alabama-Ole Miss game in which he wrote, "Hold your horses, the elephants are coming." **Big Al** officially debuted at the 1980 Sugar Bowl, a 24-9 Crimson Tide victory over Arkansas.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	ALABAMA	OPP
SCORING	517	258
Points Per Game	36.9	18.4
FIRST DOWNS	340	234
Rushing	154	81
Passing	170	141
Penalty	16	12
RUSHING YARDAGE	2893	1433
Yards gained rushing	3161	1823
Yards lost rushing	268	390
Rushing Attempts	567	452
Average Per Rush	5.1	3.2
Average Per Game	206.6	102.4
TDs Rushing	35	5
PASSING YARDAGE	3890	3165
Comp-Att-Int	290-451-10	268-493-11
Average Per Pass	8.6	6.4
Average Per Catch	13.4	11.8
Average Per Game	277.9	226.1
TDs Passing	32	19
TOTAL OFFENSE	6783	4598
Total Plays	1018	945
Average Per Play	6.7	4.9
Average Per Game	484.5	328.4
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	49-1006	60-1291
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	25-234	12-83
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	11-84	10-124
KICK RETURN AVG.	20.5	21.5
PUNT RETURN AVG.	9.4	6.9
INT RETURN AVG.	7.6	12.4
FUMBLES-LOST	18-12	20-9
PENALTIES-YARDS	69-562	61-516
Average Per Game	40.1	36.9
PUNTS-YARDS	55-2640	88-3790
Average Per Punt	48.0	43.1
Net punt average	44.7	38.4
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:45	27:41
3RD-DOWN CONV.	102/198	82/217
3rd-Down Pct.	52%	38%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	10/13	7/18
4th-Down Pct.	77%	39%
SACKS BY-YARDS	32-206	16-108
MISC YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	68	27
FG-ATTEMPTS	14-22	23-25
ATTENDANCE	785418	338939
Games/Avg Per Game	8/98177	4/84735
Neutral Site Games		2/72014

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Alabama	125	191	92	102	7	517
Opponent	49	80	74	55	0	258

5-YEAR RECORD 58-9



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Jake Coker (6-5, 232, Sr.)
	Alec Morris (6-3, 233, Jr.)
FB	Bo Scarbrough (6-2, 240, Fr.)
	Michael Nysewander (6-1, 237, Sr.)
RB	Derrick Henry (6-3, 242, Jr.)
	Kenyan Drake (6-1, 210, Sr.)
LT	Cam Robinson (6-6, 326, So.)
	Brandon Greene (6-5, 300, Jr.)
LG	Alphonse Taylor (6-5, 325, Jr.)
	Ross Pierschbacher (6-4, 298, Fr.)
C	Ryan Kelly (6-5, 297, Sr.)
	Bradley Bozeman (6-5, 320, So.)
RG	Ross Pierschbacher (6-4, 298, Fr.)
	Bradley Bozeman (6-5, 320, So.)
RT	Dominick Jackson (6-6, 315, Sr.)
	Grant Hill (6-6, 322, Jr.)
TE	O.J. Howard (6-6, 242, Jr.)
	TY Flournoy-Smith (6-3, 247, Sr.)
WR	ArDarius Stewart (6-1, 204, So.)
	Chris Black (6-0, 192, Jr.)
WR	Robert Foster (6-2, 194, So.)
	Cam Sims (6-5, 209, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jarran Reed (6-4, 313, Sr.)
	D.J. Pettway (6-2, 270, Sr.)
NT	A'Shawn Robinson (6-4, 312, Jr.)
	Darren Lake (6-3, 315, Sr.)
DE	Jonathan Allen (6-3, 272, Jr.)
	Da'Shawn Hand (6-4, 273, So.)
OLB	Denzel Devall (6-2, 252, Sr.)
	Rashaan Evans (6-3, 225, So.)
ILB	Reuben Foster (6-1, 240, Jr.)
	Shaun Dion Hamilton (6-0, 229, So.)
ILB	Reggie Ragland (6-2, 252, Sr.)
	Dillon Lee (6-4, 242, Sr.)
OLB	Ryan Anderson (6-2, 258, Jr.)
	Tim Williams (6-4, 230, Jr.)
CB	Eddie Jackson (6-0, 194, Jr.)
	Tony Brown (6-0, 195, So.)
CB	Cyrus Jones (5-10, 196, Sr.)
	Marlon Humphrey (6-1, 192, Fr.)
FS	Geno Smith (6-0, 196, Sr.)
	Jabriel Washington (5-11, 182, Sr.)
SS	Hootie Jones (6-2, 219, So.)
	Maurice Smith (6-0, 199, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

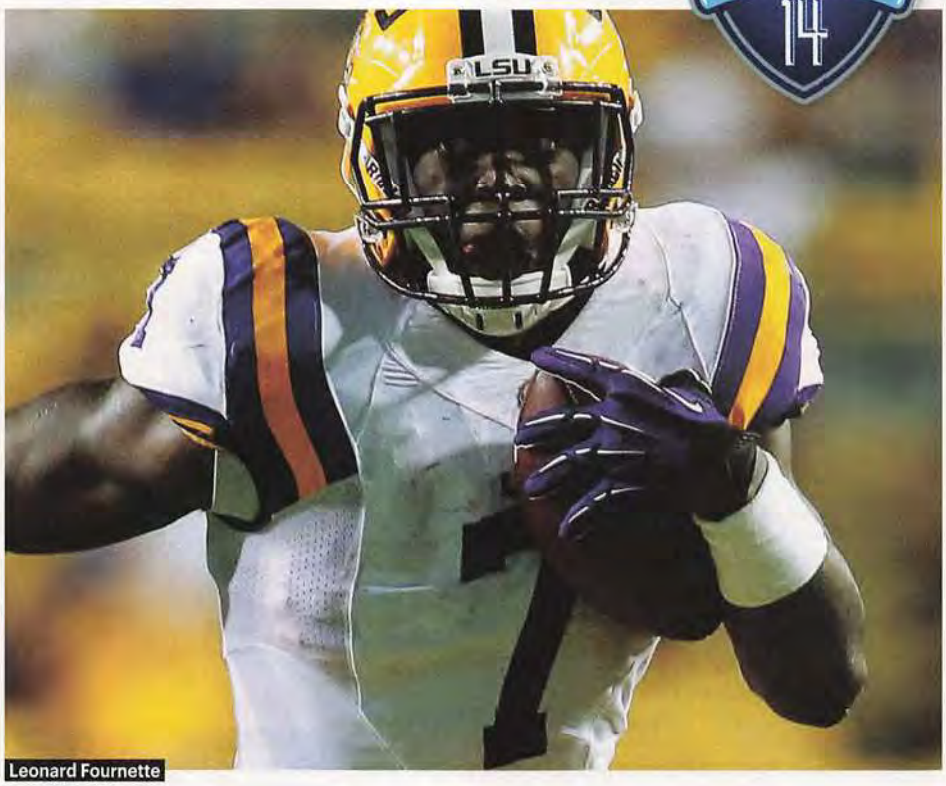
K	Adam Griffith (5-10, 192, Jr.)
P	JK Scott (6-5, 195, So.)

Sporting News All-American

LSU TIGERS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 14

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 3


Leonard Fournette

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	McNeese State	
S.12	@MISSISSIPPI STATE	29-34
S.19	Auburn	7-41
S.26	@SYRACUSE	
O.3	Eastern Michigan	
O.10	@SOUTH CAROLINA	
O.17	Florida	30-27
O.24	Western Kentucky	
N.7	@ALABAMA	13-20
N.14	Arkansas	0-17
N.21	@OLE MISS	10-7
N.28	Texas A&M	23-17

COACH

Les Miles
11th year (103-29)
Career record: 131-50

Offensive coordinator: Cam Cameron (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Kevin Steele (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Notre Dame in the Music City Bowl, 31-28)
Stadium: Tiger Stadium (102,321)
Tickets: 800-960-8587
Site: Baton Rouge, La.
Website: lsusports.net
Twitter: @LSUfball

These are anxious times in Tigertown.

LSU was 8-5 last season, the Tigers' fewest wins since 2008. Defensive coordinator John Chavis bolted for archrival Texas A&M after LSU's 31-28 loss to Notre Dame in the Music City Bowl, leaving behind an SEC-leading defense often victimized by an offense that ranked 114th nationally in passing and 73rd in scoring.

New defensive coordinator Kevin Steele drew mixed reviews from LSU fans when he was introduced in January, many of them remembering his last stint as a coordinator at Clemson that ended in a 70-33 rout by West Virginia in the 2012 Orange Bowl. Counterbalancing that was Les Miles' hiring of Louisiana native and uber-recruiter Ed Orgeron as defensive line coach. Orgeron quickly helped the Tigers land another top-10 recruiting class, though he couldn't work miracles at quarterback.

Offensive coordinator Cam Cameron vowed to simplify his NFL-based offensive system, and Miles promised an open competition between junior Anthony Jennings and sophomore Brandon Harris that will stretch into fall camp. Their performances in the spring game were inconclusive.

Jennings started all but LSU's game at Auburn, throwing for 1,611 yards, 11 touchdowns and seven interceptions on 111-of-227 passing. His 48.9 completion percentage was the lowest of any regular SEC starter.

DIFFERENCE-MAKERS

Leonard Fournette, RB

Fournette was the consensus No. 1 recruit in the nation following his 2013 senior season in high school. He showed it wasn't just hype in his first year at LSU, supplanting senior Terrence Magee as the Tigers' starting running back. At 6-1 and 230 pounds, Fournette combines great size and great speed, allowing him to break the 1,000-yard barrier in his first season with 1,034. He also crossed the goal line 10 times.

Harris led the SEC in passing efficiency, though it was a phantom stat based on a thin set of numbers (25-of-45, 452 yards, 6 TDs, 2 INTs). In fact, after being pulled from the Auburn game, Harris didn't complete a pass the second half of the season.

"We were the weak link on the team last year," Harris said after the spring game. "It's not nice when people talk about our quarterback situation, and that we are not doing really well. I take that with a chip on my shoulder."

FOURNETTE: GERALD HERBERT / AP

Whoever takes the first snap Sept. 5 against McNeese State will be handing the ball plenty to sophomore tailback Leonard Fournette. A preseason All-SEC pick, Fournette rushed for 1,034 yards and 10 touchdowns and returned a kickoff for a touchdown against Notre Dame last year. Cameron called him the most improved player on LSU's offense in the spring, a scary thought for the opposing defenders Fournette plowed over last season.

Part of LSU's passing-game struggles were a youthful receiver corps. The key players are a year older, led by Travin Dural (37 catches, 758 yards, 7 TDs) and Malachi Dupre (14, 318, 5). Dupre made two stylish touchdown catches in the spring game, looking like the kind of Jarvis Landry/Odell Beckham Jr.-like playmaker the Tigers lacked in 2014.

Steele plans a more aggressive, multiple defense than did Chavis. It should be strong up the middle with returning tackles Christian LaCouture and Davon Godchaux, middle linebacker Kendell Beckwith (LSU's leader with 77 tackles) and safeties Jalen Mills and Jamal Adams, the latter drawing comparisons to former LSU All-American Eric Reid.

The ends, likely Tashawn Bower and Maquedius Bain, must not only replace departed starters Danielle Hunter and Jermauria Rasco but try to improve on their combined 5.5 sacks and 20.5 tackles for loss.

Starting kicker Colby Delahoussaye (11-of-15 field goals, 34-of-36 extra points) returns, but a late-season swoon that led Miles to give Trent Domingue (2-of-4 field goals, 6-for-6 PATs) a try casts the position in doubt. Senior Jamie Keehn was the SEC's second-leading punter last season while averaging 44.9 yards per kick.

BOTTOM LINE

Miles' 11th season in Baton Rouge will be his most critical. LSU has Top 10 talent at every position except the most important one: quarterback. Neither Jennings nor Harris need to be great to lead LSU to a CFP bowl or the SEC Championship Game, but at least one of them must improve. If they can, the rest of the Tigers are plenty good enough to follow them to a desirable postseason address.

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

- Kevin Toliver II, CB ★★★★★
- Tyron Johnson, WR ★★★★★
- Maea Teuhema, OL ★★★★

The Tigers finished the 2015 recruiting cycle ranked No. 5 nationally per 247Sports and, as usual, there are plenty of talented football players heading to Baton Rouge. Kevin Toliver enrolled for spring and is one of the most complete, naturally gifted cornerbacks in the 2015 class. LSU swiped him from Trinity Christian in Jacksonville, Fla. Three in-state running backs—David Ducre, Derrius Guice and Nick Brossette—give the Tigers even more depth at that position, while three speedy in-state playmakers—Tyron Johnson, Donte Jackson and Derrick Dillon—add versatility and explosiveness to the roster. New defensive assistant Ed Orgeron made an impact in a short time, landing defensive end Arden Key from Atlanta, a longtime South Carolina commit.

MASCOT: ALEX BRANDON/AP

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Anthony Jennings	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	13	118.3	111-227-7	48.9	1611	11	123.9

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Leonard Fournette	13	187	1034	5.5	10	79.5

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Travin Dural	13	37	758	20.5	7	58.3

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Kendell Beckwith	13	36	41	77

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Christian LaCouture	13	2.5	13

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Rickey Jefferson	2	41	20.5	0
Tre'Davious White	2	0	0.0	0

BEHIND THE CAGE

Mike the Tiger, a 440-pound Bengal/Siberian mix, is pulled by LSU cheerleaders through Death Valley in a travel trailer until his cage is parked next to the opponent's locker room in the southeast end of the stadium. Opposing players must walk past Mike to reach their locker room. Tradition dictates the Tigers will score a touchdown for every growl Mike elicits before games.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	LSU	OPP
SCORING	359	228
Points Per Game	27.6	17.5
FIRST DOWNS	262	202
Rushing	158	100
Passing	85	89
Penalty	19	13
RUSHING YARDAGE	2919	1985
Yards gained rushing	3250	2243
Yards lost rushing	331	258
Rushing Attempts	621	460
Average Per Rush	4.7	4.3
Average Per Game	224.5	152.7
TDs Rushing	25	16
PASSING YARDAGE	2118	2134
Comp-Att-Int	138-276-9	199-385-10
Average Per Pass	7.7	5.5
Average Per Catch	15.3	10.7
Average Per Game	162.9	164.2
TDs Passing	17	10
TOTAL OFFENSE	5037	4119
Total Plays	897	845
Average Per Play	5.6	4.9
Average Per Game	387.5	316.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	26-695	29-559
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	26-280	21-192
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	10-83	9-23
KICK RETURN AVG.	26.7	19.6
PUNT RETURN AVG.	10.8	9.1
INT RETURN AVG.	8.3	2.6
FUMBLES-LOST	23-8	18-10
PENALTIES-YARDS	71-595	57-510
Average Per Game	45.8	39.2
PUNTS-YARDS	71-3189	90-3735
Average Per Punt	44.9	41.5
Net punt average	41.4	36.6
TIME OF POSS./GAME	33:08	26:52
3RD-DOWN CONV.	71/178	71/197
3rd-Down Pct.	40%	36%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	9/16	7/15
4th-Down Pct.	56%	47%
SACKS BY-YARDS	19-115	25-183
MISC YARDS	0	10
TDS SCORED	46	27
FG-ATTEMPTS	13-19	13-15
ATTENDANCE	712063	351459
Games/Avg Per Game	7/101723	4/87865
Neutral Site Games		2/66009

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
LSU	89	97	88	85	0	359
Opponent	82	65	31	43	7	228

5-YEAR RECORD 52-14

DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Anthony Jennings (6-2, 216, Jr.)
	Brandon Harris (6-3, 188, So.)
FB	David Ducre (6-0, 239, Fr.)
	John David Moore (6-3, 229, So.)
RB	Leonard Fournette (6-1, 230, So.)
	Darrel Williams (6-0, 230, So.)
LT	Jerald Hawkins (6-6, 309, Jr.)
	Jonah Austin (6-6, 330, Sr.)
LG	Ethan Pocic (6-7, 301, Jr.)
	Garrett Brumfield (6-4, 309, Fr.)
C	Andy Dodd (6-4, 336, So.)
	Will Clapp (6-5, 295, Fr.)
RG	Josh Boutte (6-5, 340, Jr.)
	K.J. Malone (6-4, 289, So.)
RT	Vadal Alexander (6-6, 320, Sr.)
	Jonah Austin (6-6, 330, Sr.)
TE	Dillon Gordon (6-4, 295, Sr.)
	DeSean Smith (6-5, 242, Jr.)
WR	Travin Dural (6-2, 192, Jr.)
	John Diarse (6-0, 210, So.)
WR	Malachi Dupre (6-3, 187, So.)
	D.J. Chark (6-2, 184, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Maquedius Bain (6-4, 299, So.)
	Lewis Neal (6-1, 255, Jr.)
DT	Davon Godchaux (6-4, 298, So.)
	Frank Herron (6-4, 278, So.)
DT	Christian LaCouture (6-5, 300, Jr.)
	Greg Gilmore (6-5, 305, So.)
DE	Tashawn Bower (6-5, 237, Jr.)
	Deondre Clark (6-3, 244, So.)
OLB	Lamar Louis (5-11, 229, Sr.)
	Duke Riley (6-1, 218, Jr.)
MLB	Kendell Beckwith (6-2, 245, Jr.)
	Ronnie Feist (6-1, 224, Jr.)
OLB	Deion Jones (6-1, 220, Sr.)
	Donnie Alexander (6-1, 201, So.)
CB	Tre'Davious White (5-11, 191, Jr.)
	Kevin Toliver II (6-2, 192, Fr.)
CB	Ed Paris (6-1, 208, So.)
	Dwayne Thomas (6-0, 182, Jr.)
FS	Jalen Mills (6-0, 194, Sr.)
	Rickey Jefferson (6-0, 204, Jr.)
SS	Jamal Adams (6-0, 206, So.)
	John Battle (6-1, 186, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Colby Delahoussaye (5-10, 176, Jr.)
P	Jamie Keehn (6-4, 220, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

ARKANSAS RAZORBACKS

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 15

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH 4

Jonathan Williams

SEC – West

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	UTEP	
S.12	Toledo (at Little Rock, AR)	
S.19	Texas Tech	49-28
S.26	Texas A&M (at Arlington, TX)	28-35
O.3	@TENNESSEE	
O.10	@ALABAMA	13-14
O.24	Auburn	21-45
O.31	Tennessee-Martin	
N.7	@OLE MISS	30-0
N.14	@LSU	17-0
N.21	Mississippi State	10-17
N.28	Missouri	14-21

COACH

Bret Bielema
Third year (10-15)
Career record: 78-39
Offensive coordinator: Dan Enos (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Robb Smith (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat Texas in the Texas Bowl, 31-7)
Stadium: Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium (72,000) and War Memorial Stadium (53,955)
Tickets: 800-982-4647
Site: Fayetteville, Ark.
Website: arkansasrazorbacks.com
Twitter: @RazorbackFB

At an Arkansas basketball game last season, Bret Bielema made a WWE-like entrance, descending from the rafters through the stands onto the court to thunderous applause. He may be the most popular football coach to ever lose 14 of his first 16 SEC games.

Of course, it's the two late wins–shutouts of LSU (17-0) and Ole Miss (30-0), plus a 31-7 Texas Bowl rout of old Southwest Conference nemesis Texas–that has fans high on the Hogs.

Arkansas' 7-6 record is a modest achievement at face value. But it's the way the Razorbacks won and the relief of emerging from the double-barreled embarrassment and discouragement of the Bobby Petrino and John L. Smith eras that has Arkansas fans fired up.

Arkansas returns the nation's only pair of 1,000-yard running backs: senior Jonathan Williams (1,190 yards, 12 touchdowns) and junior Alex Collins (1,100, 12). They take the heat off senior quarterback Brandon Allen (190-of-339 passing, 2,285 yards, 20 TDs, 5 INTs), who was a modest 10th in SEC passing efficiency.

Keon Hatcher overcame some early drops to become the Razorbacks' top receiver last year (43 catches, 558 yards, 6 TDs), just eclipsing All-SEC tight end Hunter Henry (37, 513, 2). The offensive line is a huge asset with four returning starters.

Arkansas was second in the SEC in total defense last year and fourth in scoring, but there are concerns. The line lost a couple of likely draft picks in Trey Flowers and Darius Philon, while end JaMichael Winston and tackle Taiwan Johnson return. Bijhon Jackson takes over at nose guard while Deatrich Wise Jr. will likely start at the other end spot.

Depth is a worry at linebacker. Brooks Ellis, Arkansas' top returning tackler with 72 stops, moves from middle to weakside, with Josh Williams taking over Ellis' old spot. The secondary's improvement allowed the whole defense to improve and should be strong again. Cornerback Jared Collins had 53 tackles and 13 passes defended and will start opposite Henre' Toliver. Rohan Gaines (59 tackles) returns at strong safety while Josh Liddell takes over at free safety.

BOTTOM LINE

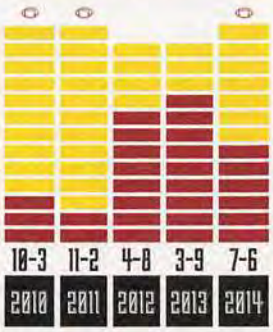
The Hogs will have some issues with depth and on defense, but eight or nine regular-season wins is a reasonable goal.

DIFFERENCE-MAKERS

Jonathan Williams, RB
Alex Collins, RB

How can you pick between Williams and Collins? Better yet, how can you stop them? Together they make the most formidable rushing tandem in the SEC. Williams, a 6-0, 224-pound power runner, started the majority of last year's games and ran for 1,190 yards and 12 TDs on 221 carries; the shifty Collins (5-11, 215 pounds) skirted around defenders for 1,100 yards and 12 scores on 204 attempts.

5-YEAR RECORD 35-28



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Brandon Allen (6-3, 210, Sr.)
FB	Kody Walker (6-2, 250, Sr.)
RB	Jonathan Williams (6-0, 224, Sr.)
LT	Denver Kirkland (6-5, 343, Jr.)
LG	Sebastian Tretola (6-5, 322, Sr.)
C	Mitch Smothers (6-3, 315, Sr.)
RG	Frank Ragnow (6-5, 311, So.)
RT	Dan Skipper (6-10, 307, Jr.)
TE	Hunter Henry (6-5, 250, Jr.)
WR	Dominique Reed (6-4, 185, Jr.)
WR	Keon Hatcher (6-2, 210, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	JaMichael Winston (6-4, 272, Jr.)
DT	Taiwan Johnson (6-2, 273, Jr.)
NG	Bijhon Jackson (6-2, 324, So.)
DE	Deatrich Wise Jr. (6-5, 271, Jr.)
OLB	Brooks Ellis (6-2, 237, Jr.)
MLB	Josh Williams (6-1, 243, Jr.)
OLB	Khalia Hackett (6-2, 232, So.)
CB	Henre' Toliver (6-1, 186, So.)
CB	Jared Collins (5-11, 172, Jr.)
FS	Josh Liddell (6-1, 209, So.)
SS	Rohan Gaines (5-11, 195, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Cole Hedlund (5-10, 170, Fr.)
P	Toby Baker (6-3, 202, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Hjalte Froholdt, OL ★★★★
2. C.J. O'Grady, TE ★★★★
3. Will Gragg, TE ★★★★

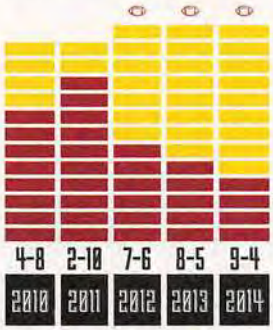
The Razorbacks finished with a strong Top 25 effort and continued to build their offensive line with elite out-of-state recruiting wins, beating the Florida powers on athletic tackle Jalen Merrick of New Smyrna Beach, Fla. Jeremiah Ledbetter, the No. 2 junior-college defensive tackle per 247Sports' Composite rankings, enrolled early and could not be blocked during spring practice. The Hogs also signed their QB of the future in four-star Ty Storey (Charleston, Ark.), one of nine top-10 prospects from within the state who elected to stay at home.

WILLIAMS: DANNY CHRISTON / AP

OLE MISS REBELS

SEC – West

5-YEAR RECORD 38-33



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Chad Kelly (6-3, 220, Jr.)
RB	Jaylen Walton (5-8, 166, Sr.)
LT	Laremy Tunsil (6-5, 305, Jr.)
LG	Aaron Morris (6-5, 345, Sr.)
C	Ben Still (6-3, 298, Sr.)
RG	Justin Bell (6-2, 352, Sr.)
RT	Fahn Cooper (6-5, 312, Sr.)
TE	Evan Engram (6-3, 227, Jr.)
WR	Laquon Treadwell (6-2, 229, Jr.)
WR	Quincy Adeboyejo (6-3, 189, Jr.)
WR	Markell Pack (6-3, 181, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	C.J. Johnson (6-2, 225, Sr.)
DT	Robert Nkemdiche (6-4, 280, Jr.)
NT	D.J. Jones (6-2, 310, Jr.)
DE	Fadol Brown (6-4, 280, Jr.)
OLB	Denzel Nkemdiche (5-11, 212, Sr.)
MLB	Christian Russell (6-0, 235, Sr.)
CB	Tee Shepard (6-1, 195, Jr.)
CB	Mike Hilton (5-9, 182, Sr.)
S	Tony Conner (6-0, 217, Jr.)
FS	C.J. Hampton (6-0, 192, So.)
SS	Trae Elston (6-0, 195, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Gary Wunderlich (6-0, 175, So.)
P	Will Gleeson (6-3, 189, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Damarkus Lodge, WR ★★★★
2. Javon Patterson, OG ★★★★
3. Van Jefferson, WR ★★★★

The Rebels got a pair of instant-impact receivers in Damarkus Lodge and Van Jefferson. There may not have been two more college-ready prospects at that position in the high school ranks during the 2015 cycle. Junior-college quarterback Chad Kelly, the nephew of Jim Kelly and a former Clemson signal-caller, arrived for the spring and is competing for the starting job. Ole Miss, which finished with the No. 17 class nationally per 247Sports, also landed the top juco defensive tackle in the country, D.J. Jones of East Mississippi CC.

SPORTING NEWS 2015 NATIONAL RANK 16

Tony Conner

CONNER: THOMAS BRANNING / AP

Ole Miss is the SEC's version of the enigma machine.

Are the Rebels the team that started 7-0 last season and was ranked as high as No. 3? Or is it the team that lost four of its last six games, including routs by Arkansas (30-0) and TCU (42-3) in the Peach Bowl?

The Rebels possess some of the SEC's most glittering talent on both sides of the ball. But there are also major issues to address.

Offensively, wide receiver Laquon Treadwell (48 catches, 632 yards, 5 touchdowns), tight end Evan Engram (38, 662, 2) and left tackle Laremy Tunsil are at least All-SEC worthy. Treadwell, whose 2014 season was cut short Nov. 1 by a broken fibula against Auburn, made a quick recovery and returned on a limited basis in spring practice. Tunsil is the SEC's top NFL prospect.

Defensively, junior tackle Robert Nkemdiche (35 tackles, 2 sacks) will draw All-America buzz as well as double teams. Safety Tony Conner (69 tackles) is also one of the nation's best.

There are issues for the Rebels, too, and they start at quarterback. Bo Wallace is gone, and with him nearly 3,200 yards passing and 3,400 yards of total offense.

Chad Kelly, a junior-college transfer and nephew of NFL great Jim Kelly, is talented but troubled, dismissed at Clemson and arrested in December in a Buffalo bar fight. Kelly's job will be to both match Wallace's production and protect the ball. Wallace threw 14 interceptions, and no Ole Miss quarterback since Eli Manning in 2003 has thrown less than 10.

Jaylen Walton (106 carries, 586 yards, 5 TDs) is the clear leader at tailback. Defensively, C.J. Hampton fills the void left at free safety by Cody Prewitt, while linebacker Denzel Nkemdiche recovers from a broken ankle.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Tony Conner, S

Conner's position at Ole Miss is called the "Huskie." It seems to be a reference to either a person's girth or a dependable, versatile and athletic canine. Whatever the case, it means that the 6-0, 217-pound, do-it-all nickel back brings it on every play. Conner can be found rushing quarterbacks (3 hurries and a sack in 2014), defending slot receivers (3 passes defended) and snuffing out running plays before they start (9.0 tackles for loss).

BOTTOM LINE

With players like Treadwell, Tunsil, Engram, Nkemdiche and Conner, the Rebels' top end talent is the equal of other SEC contenders. Two major questions dog Ole Miss: depth and quarterback. A productive quarterback position could allow the Rebels to be an SEC West contender–or it could unravel everything.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **5**

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Tennessee-Martin	
S.12	Fresno State	
S.19	@ALABAMA	23-17
S.26	Vanderbilt	41-3
O.3	@FLORIDA	
O.10	New Mexico State	
O.17	@MEMPHIS	24-3
O.24	Texas A&M	35-20
O.31	@AUBURN	31-35
N.7	Arkansas	0-30
N.21	LSU	7-10
N.28	@MISSISSIPPI STATE	31-17

COACH

Hugh Freeze

Fourth year (24-15)

Career record: 54-22

Offensive coordinators: Matt Luke (fourth year) and Dan Werner (fourth year)

Defensive coordinators: Dave Wommack (fourth year) and Jason Jones (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 9-4

(Lost to TCU in the Peach Bowl, 42-3)

Stadium: Vaught-Hemingway Stadium (60,580)

Tickets: 888-732-8587

Site: Oxford, Miss.

Website: olemisssports.com

Twitter: @OleMissFB

MISSISSIPPI STATE BULLDOGS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **6**

De'Runnya Wilson

SEC – West

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@SOUTHERN MISS	49-0
S.12	LSU	34-29
S.19	Northwestern State	
S.26	@AUBURN	38-23
O.3	@TEXAS A&M	48-31
O.10	Troy	
O.17	Louisiana Tech	
O.24	Kentucky	45-31
N.5	@MISSOURI	
N.14	Alabama	20-25
N.21	@ARKANSAS	17-10
N.28	Ole Miss	17-31

COACH

Dan Mullen
Seventh year (46-31)
Career record: 46-31

Offensive coordinators:
Billy Gonzales (second year)
John Hevesy (second year)
Defensive coordinator:
Manny Diaz (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 10-3
(Lost to Georgia Tech in the Orange Bowl, 49-34)
Stadium: Davis Wade Stadium (61,337)
Tickets: 888-GO-DAWGS
Site: Starkville, Miss.
Website: hailstate.com
Twitter: @HailStateFB

There was no bigger decision in the offseason than that of quarterback Dak Prescott returning to Mississippi State for his senior campaign.

Now the question is how close can the Dak Attack come to replicating last year's unprecedented season.

The Bulldogs spent five weeks at No. 1, their first time atop the polls in program history, including the first week of the College Football Playoff rankings. Though they lost three of their last four to Alabama, Ole Miss and Georgia Tech in the Orange Bowl, State still won 10 games for the first time since 1999 and finished the season at No. 11.

Prescott piled up 4,435 yards of total offense and 41 touchdowns behind a veteran offensive line. That line lost three starters, including center Dillon Day, leaving State without a single player who has played center on the college level. Junior Jamaal Clayborn is the favorite to earn the job.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

De'Runnya Wilson, WR

Seven Mississippi State receivers had 300 or more receiving yards in 2014. Yet, somehow leading receiver Wilson got the lion's share of the touchdown catches with nine of the team's 31. Wilson saved his best performances for MSU's toughest games—Alabama, Ole Miss and Georgia Tech in the Orange Bowl. While the three games resulted in the Bulldogs' only three losses, Wilson had a combined 25 receptions for 313 yards and three touchdowns in those contests.

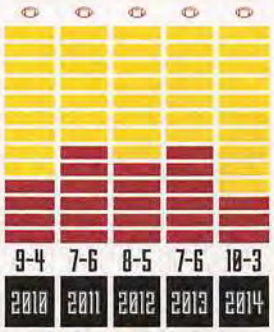
Josh Robinson decided to take his talents to the NFL after rushing for 1,203 yards last season, leaving the Bulldogs to spread out the carries when Prescott doesn't have the ball. Ashton Shumpert (274 yards, 2 TDs) and Brandon Holloway (294 yards, TD) will lead the committee. Leading receiver De'Runnya Wilson (680 yards, 9 TDs) was arrested on drug charges during the offseason and had to overcome a knee injury but was expected to return healthy after some internal discipline.

The defense has to be retooled everywhere. Chris Jones (26 tackles, 3 sacks) is the only returning starter on the front line, though fortunately for State he's one of the SEC's best. Top tackler Benardrick McKinney (71 stops) is replaced by Beniquez Brown (top returning tackler with 62), while strong safety Kendrick Market (49 tackles) tore his Achilles' tendon last fall but is expected to return.

BOTTOM LINE

Prescott coming back is huge, but even his enormous presence probably won't keep the Bulldogs out of the SEC West cellar. A big part of MSU's success last year was predicated on an offensive line that isn't there anymore. If the Bulldogs can rebuild that line successfully, State is at least bowling again.

5-YEAR RECORD 41-24



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Dak Prescott (6-2, 230, Sr.)
RB	Ashton Shumpert (6-2, 218, Jr.)
LT	Rufus Warren (6-7, 295, Sr.)
LG	Justin Malone (6-7, 320, Sr.)
C	Jamaal Clayborn (6-4, 320, Jr.)
RG	Devon Desper (6-3, 300, Jr.)
RT	Justin Senior (6-5, 295, Jr.)
TE	Gus Walley (6-4, 235, Jr.)
WR	De'Runnya Wilson (6-5, 225, Jr.)
WR	Fred Ross (6-2, 205, Jr.)
WR	Fred Brown (6-1, 190, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Ryan Brown (6-6, 262, Sr.)
DT	Nelson Adams (6-3, 300, Jr.)
DT	Chris Jones (6-5, 308, Jr.)
DE	A.J. Jefferson (6-3, 270, Jr.)
OLB	Richie Brown (6-2, 235, Jr.)
MLB	Beniquez Brown (6-1, 235, Jr.)
OLB	Zach Jackson (6-2, 210, Sr.)
CB	Will Redmond (6-0, 185, Sr.)
CB	Taveze Calhoun (6-1, 184, Sr.)
FS	Deontay Evans (5-10, 205, Jr.)
SS	Kendrick Market (5-10, 188, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Devon Bell (6-2, 185, Sr.)
P	Devon Bell (6-2, 185, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

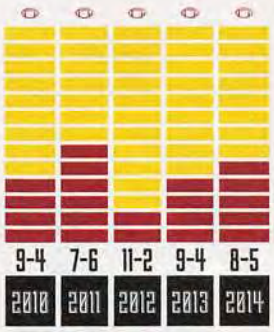
1. **Jamal Peters,** S ★★★★
2. **Leo Lewis,** LB ★★★★
3. **Fletcher Adams,** DE ★★★★

The Bulldogs finished with the nation's No. 18 class per the 247Sports Composite rankings, and, on paper, it's one of the best classes coach Dan Mullen and his staff have signed. There may not have been a tougher inside-linebacker prospect in the country last cycle than Leo Lewis, who could play immediately. Jamal Peters is a 6-3, ball-hawking safety who could also see action this season. Mississippi State always recruits junior-college talent well, and wide receiver Donald Gray and offensive tackle Martinas Rankin arrived in time for spring. Look for those two to also make an early impact.

REYNOLDS; BUTCH DILL / AP

TEXAS A&M AGGIES

5-YEAR RECORD 44-21



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Kyle Allen (6-3, 205, So.)
RB	Tra Carson (6-0, 235, Sr.)
LT	Avery Gennesy (6-5, 305, Jr.)
LG	Jermaine Eluemunor (6-4, 315, Jr.)
C	Mike Matthews (6-2, 290, Sr.)
RG	Joseph Cheek (6-7, 310, Sr.)
RT	Germain Ifedi (6-5, 325, Jr.)
WR	Speedy Noil (5-11, 185, So.)
WR	Ricky Seals-Jones (6-5, 235, So.)
WR	Josh Reynolds (6-4, 190, Jr.)
WR	Christian Kirk (5-11, 190, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Myles Garrett (6-5, 255, So.)
NG	Hardreck Walker (6-2, 300, Jr.)
DT	Alonzo Williams (6-4, 296, Sr.)
DE	Julien Obioha (6-4, 265, Sr.)
OLB	Shaan Washington (6-3, 235, Jr.)
MLB	Claude George (6-2, 235, Jr.)
OLB	Otaro Alaka (6-3, 225, So.)
CB	Nick Harvey (5-10, 180, So.)
CB	De'Vante Harris (5-11, 175, Sr.)
FS	Armani Watts (5-11, 190, So.)
SS	Justin Evans (6-1. 195. So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Taylor Bertolet (5-9, 185, Sr.)
P	Drew Kaser (6-3, 210, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Daylon Mack, DT ★★★★★
2. Christian Kirk, WR ★★★★★
3. Kyler Murray, QB ★★★★★

Texas A&M finished with the nation's No. 11 class per 247Sports and, as expected, there's a load of talent headed to College Station yet again. Daylon Mack is built like a teapot, but the 6-1, 330-pounder is one of the most productive defensive tackles you will find and it would be a shock if he doesn't play early. The Aggies continued to raid Arizona (they got No. 1 QB Kyle Allen there last cycle) by landing Christian Kirk, one of the most coveted receivers in the country. Kyler Murray, a Texas prep legend from Allen, reminds many of ex-Georgia Tech QB Joe Hamilton.

WILSON: JIM LYTLE / AP

Josh Reynolds

The $450 million expansion of Kyle Field isn't the only remodeling project at Texas A&M these days.

The Aggies' defense ranked last in the SEC allowing 450.8 yards per game. Enter John Chavis as defensive coordinator from division rival LSU, whose unit led the SEC in defense last season.

Texas A&M possessed talented but drop-prone wide receivers who at times ran poor routes. Welcome receivers coach Aaron Morehead from Virginia Tech, who won a Super Bowl ring in Indianapolis.

The Aggies led the SEC with 305.5 passing yards per game, but wanted to beef up a rushing attack that ranked 12th averaging 149.9. Say hello to Dave Christensen, the former Wyoming coach and Utah offensive coordinator who will be A&M's offensive line coach/running game coordinator.

The moves underline a sense of urgency for Kevin Sumlin, who heads into his fourth year having presided over a downward winning trend: 11-2 in 2012 to 9-4 in 2013 and 8-5 in 2014.

For the second straight season, Sumlin may have a choice to make at quarterback. Kenny Hill has transferred, leaving Kyle Allen (1,322 yards, 16 touchdowns, 7 interceptions) as the only experienced hand.

In February the Aggies signed Kyler Murray, the nation's top-rated dual threat quarterback. The problem with Murray, who never lost a game at Allen (Texas) High, is that he is a highly coveted baseball product. If he goes pro, the Aggies don't have another scholarship quarterback. Either way, the running game will likely feature more Tra Carson (581 yards, 5 TDs) working behind a veteran offensive line.

Defensively, Chavis will enjoy plotting strategies for sophomore end Myles Garrett. Garrett recorded 11.5 sacks in 2014 to break the SEC freshman record set by someone named Jadeveon Clowney. Behind Garrett, however, Chavis will likely have to plug in some junior college transfers like Claude George at middle linebacker and Justin Evans at strong safety.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Josh Reynolds, WR

Reynolds proved to be one of the best receivers in the SEC last year in just his first season after transferring from Tyler Junior College. His 52 receptions for 842 yards garnered second-team All-SEC honors, while his 13 receiving touchdowns set the A&M record. The 6-4 Reynolds, gifted with speed and superb route-running, was voted by teammates as A&M's 2014 Offensive MVP.

BOTTOM LINE

The Aggies bear similarities to last year's Ole Miss team: eight starters returning on both sides from an 8-5 team, including an experienced quarterback and a defensive lineman about to blossom into greatness. A&M will have some losses, but could also win more than expected.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

7

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Arizona State (at Arlington, TX)	
S.12	Ball State	
S.19	Nevada	
S.26	Arkansas (at Arlington, TX)	35-28
O.3	Mississippi State	31-48
O.17	Alabama	0-59
O.24	@ OLE MISS	20-35
O.31	South Carolina	52-28
N.7	Auburn	41-38
N.14	Western Carolina	
N.21	@ VANDERBILT	
N.28	@ LSU	17-23

COACH

Kevin Sumlin
Fourth year (28-11)
Career record: 63-28

Offensive coordinator: Jake Spavital (third year)
Defensive coordinator: John Chavis (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat West Virginia in the Liberty Bowl, 45-37)
Stadium: Kyle Field (102,512)
Tickets: 888-TAM-12TH
Site: College Station, Texas
Website: 12thman.com
Twitter: @AggieFootball

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

PROJECTED FINISH

1. **Appalachian State**
   Bowl Projection: New Orleans Bowl
2. **Louisiana**
   Bowl Projection: GoDaddy Bowl
3. **Georgia Southern**
   Bowl Projection: Camellia Bowl
4. **Arkansas State**
   Bowl Projection: Cure Bowl
5. **Texas State**
6. **Troy**
7. **South Alabama**
8. **UL Monroe**
9. **Georgia State**
10. **New Mexico State**
11. **Idaho**

Taylor Lamb, QB, Appalachian State

App State looks to continue trend of league upstarts winning SBC

BY TIM BUCKLEY | *The Daily Advertiser (Lafayette, La.)*

Three Sun Belt Conference teams are coming off postseason appearances heading into this season– Louisiana won a fourth straight New Orleans Bowl, Arkansas State went for a fourth consecutive time to the GoDaddy Bowl and South Alabama made its bowl debut at the inaugural Camellia Bowl.

But even after going 7-5 last year, Texas State was one of a small handful of FBS programs that did not receive an invite to go bowling despite being bowl-eligible.

The Bobcats weren't pleased, especially after winning a nonconference game at Tulsa and closing with November victories over bowl-bound Arkansas State and Georgia State.

Two other SBC teams—surprise league champion Georgia Southern (9-3) and fellow FCS call-up Appalachian State (7-5)—had enough wins to earn a postseason bid but, even after the Eagles appealed, couldn't go because of NCAA transition rules while making the move to FBS play.

One year earlier, seven Sun Belt teams were bowl-eligible—but only Louisiana and Arkansas State got the call.

The Sun Belt partners in snub, however, can rejoice. Help is on the way for a league that should have multiple 2015 candidates.

The conference adds a fourth primary tie-in with Orlando's new Cure Bowl, which will match a Sun Belt team against one from the American Athletic Conference. And a fifth—which would pit an SBC school against one from the AAC in Little Rock, Ark.—also applied in April for NCAA approval.

That should make everyone in the Sun Belt happy, at least for now.

Five should be sufficient, SBC commissioner Karl Benson says, "only until somebody else is left out, and they're saying, 'We need another game, we need another game.'"

Fresh bowl opportunities aren't all that's new in the Sun Belt.

Troy welcomes a new leader, ex-Kentucky offensive coordinator Neal Brown, following longtime head coach Larry Blakeney's retirement.

And at least 15 transfers from the football-nixing UAB Blazers are joining Sun Belt programs, including eight scholarship players and two walk-ons at South Alabama. The Jaguars have already been dubbed by some fans in Alabama as the "Jagzers."

Rashon Ceaser, WR, Louisiana-Monroe

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Familiar routine: Louisiana and Arkansas State have been to the same bowl (New Orleans and GoDaddy, respectively) four straight years. Is this when one finally goes elsewhere?**

LAMB: ROGELIO V. SOLIS / AP; MCGUIRE: DAVID TULIS / AP; CEASER: DAVE MARTIN / AP

2015 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Chad Carson, 247Sports

247 SPORTS COMPOSITE

RANK	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	POINTS
1	Louisiana	25	0	0	13	146.25
2	South Alabama	24	0	0	12	133.20
3	Arkansas State	24	0	0	13	132.95
4	Georgia Southern	21	0	0	13	128.03
5	Texas State	25	0	0	7	126.25
6	Louisiana-Monroe	27	0	0	7	117.99
7	Troy	21	0	0	8	117.63
8	Appalachian State	22	0	0	4	112.49
9	New Mexico State	24	0	0	2	93.32
10	Idaho	25	0	0	2	92.89
11	Georgia State	18	0	0	2	90.65

ALL-SUN BELT

OFFENSE

- **QB** **Fredi Knighten,** Sr., Arkansas State
- **RB** **Matt Breida,** Jr., Georgia Southern
- **RB** **Elijah McGuire,** Jr., Louisiana
- **OL** **Adrian Bellard,** Sr., Texas State
- **OL** **Chris May,** Sr., South Alabama
- **OL** **Dalton Bennett,** Sr., Troy
- **OL** **Mykhael Quave,** Sr., Louisiana
- **OL** **Joseph Scelfo,** Jr., South Alabama
- **WR** **Rashon Ceaser,** Sr., Louisiana-Monroe
- **WR** **Donovan Harden,** Sr., Georgia State
- **WR** **Jamal Robinson,** Sr., Louisiana

DEFENSE

- **DL** **Ronald Blair,** Sr., Appalachian State
- **DL** **Gerrand Johnson,** Sr., Louisiana-Monroe
- **DL** **Ja'Von Rolland-Jones,** So., Arkansas State
- **LB** **John Law,** Jr., Appalachian State
- **LB** **Marc Millan,** Sr., Idaho
- **LB** **Joseph Peterson,** Sr., Georgia State
- **LB** **Dominique Tovell,** Sr., Louisiana
- **DB** **Montres Kitchens,** Sr., Troy
- **DB** **Mitch Lane,** Sr., Louisiana-Monroe
- **DB** **Doug Middleton,** Sr., Appalachian State
- **DB** **David Mims II,** Sr., Texas State

SPECIALISTS

- **K** **Aleem Sunanon,** Jr., South Alabama
- **P** **Austin Rehkow,** Jr., Idaho

PRESEASON MVP

As a sophomore in 2014, McGuire was a first-team All-Sun Belt running back, first-team All-SBC all-purpose player, SBC Offensive Player of the Year and SBC Player of the Year. He had 1,264 rushing yards, averaged 7.6 yards per carry, scored 16 touchdowns, caught a team-high 45 passes. Game over.

Elijah McGuire

OVERRATED

ARKANSAS STATE

After a stretch with five head coaches in five years from 2010-2014, this could be the season related recruiting challenges dent the Red Wolves' depth.

UNDERRATED

LOUISIANA

Four straight seasons with nine-plus wins and four consecutive bowl wins. Seriously, who does that? Hint: Only two programs have such an active streak. Oregon's the other.

2 Pass-happy: Six SBC returnees—Nick Arbuckle (3,283), Fredi Knighten (3,277), Tyler Rogers (2,779), Tyler Jones (2,670), Matt Linehan (2,515), Taylor Lamb (2,381)—threw for 2,000-plus yards in 2014.

3 Breakthrough needed: Georgia State (two), Idaho (three) and New Mexico State (five) collectively have 10 wins the last three years; none had more than two any of those seasons.

RATING THE SUN BELT

FASTEST RECEIVER
Teldrick Morgan, New Mexico State
The speedy Aggie had 75 catches for 903 yards and seven touchdowns as a redshirt sophomore.

BEST HANDS
J.D. McKissic, WR, Arkansas State
The Red Wolves' slot receiver comes back as the nation's leader in career receptions among active players.

BEST PASSING QB
Tyler Jones, Texas State
Jones threw for 2,670 yards and 22 touchdowns while completing 65.4 percent of his passes as a sophomore starter.

BEST RUNNING QB
Kevin Ellison, Georgia Southern
Working from an offense that led the nation in rushing, Ellison ran for 1,000-plus yards and was the Sun Belt's No. 7 rusher.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Elijah McGuire, Louisiana
McGuire led the nation in yards per carry as a freshman at 8.4, then backed it up with a 7.6-yard average last season.

BEST INSTINCTS
Elijah McGuire, RB, Louisiana
If there is a hole to hit, McGuire will find it. If there is a cut to be made, McGuire will make it.

BEST ATHLETE
Elijah McGuire, RB, Louisiana
See "Most Elusive Running Back" and "Best Instincts," then consider that he catches passes out of the backfield and returns punts too.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED (OFF THE FIELD)
Matt Dobson, S, Georgia Southern
Named to the 2014 Capital One Academic All-America Football second team, Dobson has a 3.73 GPA as a history major.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Fredi Knighten, QB, Arkansas State
If driving the Red Wolves downfield on their last series of a 2013 GoDaddy Bowl win didn't show it, his overtime TD pass in a 2014 overtime win at Utah State did: Knighten is a cool customer.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Jamal Robinson, WR, Louisiana
Knee and foot surgery cost him much of last season, but a medical hardship was granted and Robinson—if healthy in 2015—could be a high pick in the 2016 NFL Draft.

TOP IMPACT FROSH
Jalen Thompson, CB, South Alabama
The defensive back/return man had gobs of legit offers, including SEC schools, but opted to stay at home in Mobile.

HARDEST HITTER
Blake Dees, LB, South Alabama
After making 77 tackles in three years at Texas Tech, then transferring back home and having to sit out a season, Dees is ready to show again that he packs a wallop.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Johnston White, RB, Arkansas State
The walk-on rushed for 500-plus yards and six touchdowns last season, and caught a TD pass too.

BEST INTERVIEW
Brandon Burks, RB, Troy
Full of personality and humor, Burks is always good for an insightful answer—and delivers it with a smile.

BEST COACH AS STRATEGIST
Willie Fritz, Georgia Southern
Fritz left Sam Houston State and turned the Eagles into Sun Belt champs in one season.

BEST COACH AS RECRUITER
Mark Hudspeth, Louisiana
Donald Trump could learn a lesson in salesmanship from the Ragin' Cajuns coach.

HOTTEST SEAT
Todd Berry, Louisiana-Monroe
With just one winning season in five years and coming off a 4-8 campaign, Berry may need a hot start to survive No. 6.

BEST VENUE
Cajun Field, Louisiana
The jambalaya and gumbo cooking outside is what it's all about at Cajun Field, which added seats in one end zone last season and awaits further planned major renovation.

APPALACHIAN STATE

MOUNTAINEERS

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1

Marcus Cox

Appalachian State's 2014 debut as a Sun Belt Conference member and FBS move-up was mostly cloudy at the start, with only a win over FCS Campbell amid five losses.

With the way the 7-5 Mountaineers closed, however, the forecast seems oh so bright for a program that won three straight FCS national championships from 2005-07. App State reeled off six wins to end 2014, including November triumphs over SBC bowl-bound teams Arkansas State and Louisiana.

Making things even more hopeful in 2015 for coach Scott Satterfield: 20 of 22 positions will likely be filled with a 2014 starter. That's right–only cornerback Brandon Pinckney and offensive tackle Davante Harris were not regulars last season. Oh, and talented punter Bentlee Critcher (40.7 yards per boot) returns as well.

The strong close can be attributed to a ground game that gained steam, a redshirt-freshman quarterback who heated up as temperatures cooled and a much-improved defense.

Junior running back Marcus Cox was terrific against both Arkansas State and Louisiana. One year after rushing for 1,250 yards and 21 touchdowns as a freshman, he topped the yardage with 1,415 (second in the SBC) and ran for another 19 TDs. Two touchdowns and 229 yards came against the Red Wolves while two more TDs and 151 yards were against the Ragin' Cajuns, so it was no fluke. Even scarier: Backup Terrence Upshaw gained another 573 yards and has two seasons left too, and Satterfield believes the Mountaineers are five deep at running back with only one, Ricky Fergerson, a senior.

Taylor Lamb–Mercer head coach Bobby Lamb's son–threw for 2,381 yards and 17 touchdowns, with single-digit interceptions. The 6-2 sophomore's top two 2014 targets, seniors Simms McElfresh and Malachi Jones, return, while youngster Shaedon Meadors, who spurned a potential redshirt year late during his freshman season, has breakout potential.

Defensively, lineman Ronald Blair (6.0 sacks), linebacker John Law (team-high 91 total tackles) and safety Doug Middleton (4 INTs) again lead a unit that topped the Sun Belt with 347.5 yards per game permitted.

BOTTOM LINE

With a visit to Clemson easily their toughest nonconference test, Appalachian State has enough quality returning starters to perhaps pull off what Georgia Southern did a season ago.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Marcus Cox, RB

Cox was the Sun Belt's leader in rushing touchdowns in 2014 with 19 and second-leading rusher with 1,415 yards. The 5-10 junior from Dacula, Ga., struggled to be consistent early on in the campaign, but saved his best games for the home stretch of the conference season with 847 rushing yards during a five-game ASU win streak in the league. That stretch included two 200-yard rushing performances and a 151-yard, two-touchdown game that helped the Mountaineers snap Louisiana's six-game win streak, 35-16, in the conference finale on the road.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Howard	
S.12	@CLEMSON	
S.26	@OLD DOMINION	
O.3	Wyoming	
O.10	@GEORGIA STATE	44-0
O.17	@LOUISIANA-MONROE	31-29
O.22	Georgia Southern	14-34
O.31	Troy	53-14
N.5	Arkansas State	37-32
N.14	@IDAHO	45-28
N.28	Louisiana	35-16
D.5	@SOUTH ALABAMA	21-47

COACH

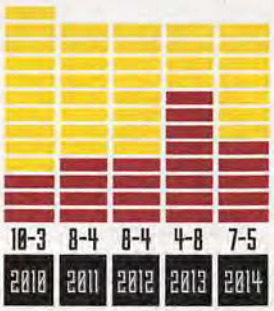
Scott Satterfield
Third year (11-13)
Career record: 11-13

Offensive coordinators: Dwayne Ledford (third year) and Frank Ponce (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Nate Woody (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-5
Stadium: Kidd Brewer Stadium (24,050)
Tickets: 828-262-2079
Site: Boone, N.C.
Website: appstatesports.com
Twitter: @AppState_FB

5-YEAR RECORD 37-24



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Taylor Lamb (6-2, 200, So.)
RB Marcus Cox (5-10, 200, Jr.)
LT Davante Harris (6-6, 275, Sr.)
LG Parker Collins (6-3, 295, Jr.)
C Jesse Chapman (6-1, 275, Sr.)
RG Colby Gossett (6-6, 315, So.)
RT Beau Nunn (6-4, 290, So.)
TE Barrett Burns (6-4, 235, Jr.)
WR Malachi Jones (6-2, 210, Sr.)
WR Bobo Beathard (5-10, 185, Sr.)
WR Simms McElfresh (5-10, 180, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Ronald Blair (6-4, 275, Sr.)
NT Tyson Fernandez (6-2, 330, Jr.)
DE Nathaniel Norwood (6-2, 235, Jr.)
OLB Kennan Gilchrist (6-2, 210, Jr.)
ILB Eric Boggs (6-3, 235, So.)
ILB John Law (6-0, 235, Jr.)
OLB Devan Stringer (5-11, 195, So.)
CB Latrell Gibbs (5-10, 170, So.)
CB Brandon Pinckney (6-0, 185, So.)
S Doug Middleton (6-0, 205, Sr.)
S Alex Gray (6-3, 210, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Zach Matics (6-2, 195, Sr.)
P Bentlee Critcher (6-1, 190, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 STAR RATING

1 • **Zireycus Letman,** WR ★★★
2 • **Daniel David,** QB ★★★
3 • **Mondo Williams,** CB ★★★

Appalachian State's 22-man class contains potential immediate impact from the junior-college ranks, including early enrollees Zireycus Letman (6-3, 195 pounds) and Mondo Williams (5-11, 175). The staff is excited about the potential of quarterback Daniel David, who racked up almost 6,000 yards and 64 touchdowns in three years as a starter for Horschton (Ga.) Mill Creek. Big wideout Markeyvious Adams (6-4, 187) was a longtime priority for the Mountaineers and should earn a spot in the receiver rotation early on.

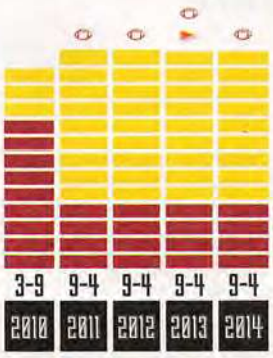
COX: DAVID GOLDMAN/AP

LOUISIANA
RAGIN' CAJUNS

Elijah McGuire

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH **2**

5-YEAR RECORD 39-25



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Brooks Haack (6-1, 219, Jr.)
RB Elijah McGuire (5-11, 198, Jr.)
LT Grant Horst (6-5, 281, So.)
LG Mykhael Quave (6-5, 294, Sr.)
C Eddie Gordon (6-1, 320, Sr.)
RG Donovan Williams (6-3, 312, Sr.)
RT Octravian Anderson (6-4, 295, Sr.)
TE Nick Byrne (6-3, 228, Jr.)
WR Jamal Robinson (6-4, 205, Sr.)
WR Jared Johnson (6-5, 215, Jr.)
WR Al Riles (5-10, 209, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE Blain Winston (6-4, 261, So.)
DT Remaine Douglas (6-3, 287, Jr.)
NT Karmichael Dunbar (6-2, 317, Jr.)
DE Kevin Fouquier (6-4, 235, Jr.)
SLB Dominique Tovell (6-2, 248, Sr.)
MLB Tre'maine Lightfoot (6-0, 230, Jr.)
WLB Otha Peters (6-2, 230, Jr.)
CB Simeon Thomas (6-3, 180, So.)
CB Jevante Watson (5-10, 175, Sr.)
FS Tracy Walker (6-2, 180, So.)
SS T.J. Worthy (6-2, 195, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Dylan Scheurich (5-8, 185, Fr.)
P Steven Coutts (6-4, 200, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Dion Ray,** QB ★★★
2. **Savion Brown,** S ★★★
3. **Mario Osborne,** DE ★★★

Coach Mark Hudspeth said his staff's camp evaluations went a long way toward helping the Ragin' Cajuns land the top-ranked class in the Sun Belt. They had to hold off a charge from Power Five schools down the stretch for several key members of the class. Recruiting is about relationships in many cases, and the relationship between Hudspeth and former player Shawn Galmore, who is on the coaching staff at Helen Cox High in Harvey, La., helped with the school's signing of dynamic QB Dion Ray.

The Ragin' Cajuns have enjoyed four straight 9-4 seasons and four consecutive New Orleans Bowl victories–one each over San Diego State, East Carolina, Tulane and Nevada–under coach Mark Hudspeth, putting Louisiana in the company of Michigan State, Oregon, South Carolina and Texas A&M as the only FBS programs to have won bowl games in each of the last four years.

Hudspeth's Cajuns got it done last season behind quarterback Terrance Broadway and running backs Elijah McGuire and Alonzo Harris, but only big-play McGuire–the reigning Sun Belt Player of the Year after producing 1,848 all-purpose yards–returns. He had offseason shoulder surgery, but much this year is in his hands, especially with big-armed Brooks Haack, strong-running Jalen Nixon and promising-but-young Jordan Davis ending the spring without a clear winner in their quarterback battle.

Another weapon, NFL prospect Jamal Robinson, was awarded a fifth year of eligibility at wide receiver following knee and foot surgeries. Slot men Al Riles and Gabe Fuselier will be utilized, especially with big-target Jared Johnson (6-5) and speedy Devin Scott being unproven wideouts. Up front, UL loses Daniel Quave, who started every game of his Cajun career, and Terry Johnson. Standout Mykhael Quave slides from tackle to guard with his brother done, while ex-N.C. State redshirt Eddie Gordon takes Johnson's center job.

Defensively, UL will be on its third coordinator in five years under Hudspeth and has undergone a complete overhaul of assistants. Ex-Auburn cornerbacks coach and longtime Mississippi State assistant Melvin Smith will coach the secondary and coordinate the defense, which returns outside linebacker Dominique Tovell (9.0 tackles for loss) but had six key defensive linemen miss most or all spring drills with injuries.

Tre'maine Lightfoot and Arkansas transfer Otha Peters will man the inside-linebacking spot, pushed by T.J. Posey. The spring health issues helped nose tackle Karmichael Dunbar develop, but big linemen Christian Ringo and Justin Hamilton will be missed. The safety trio of Tracy Walker, T.J. Worthy and Travis Crawford finished 2014 strong, and impressive-looking cornerback Simeon Thomas returns after sitting out last season.

BOTTOM LINE

If the Cajuns make it five straight bowl wins, they probably will be on McGuire's back and only if the defense jells fast.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Elijah McGuire, RB

During his two seasons in Lafayette, McGuire has racked up on league honors: Freshman of the Year (2013), first-team All-Sun Belt (2013 and 2014), Player of the Year (2014) and Offensive Player of the Year (2014). The latter two came after he led the conference in all-purpose yards last year with 1,848 and led his team in rushing (1,264 yards) and receiving (45 receptions). The 5-11, 198-pound junior could see his carries increase after the graduations of running back Alonzo Harris (807 rushing yards in '14) and dual-threat quarterback Terrance Broadway (653).

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@KENTUCKY	
S.12	Northwestern State	
S.26	Akron	
O.3	@LOUISIANA TECH	20-48
O.10	Texas State	34-10
O.20	@ARKANSAS STATE	55-40
O.31	Louisiana-Monroe	34-27
N.7	@GEORGIA STATE	34-31
N.12	@SOUTH ALABAMA	19-9
N.21	New Mexico State	44-16
N.28	@APPALACHIAN STATE	16-35
D.5	Troy	42-23

COACH

Mark Hudspeth
Fifth year (36-16)
Career record: 102-37
Offensive coordinator: Jay Johnson (fifth year)
Defensive coordinator: Melvin Smith (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 9-4
(Beat Nevada in the New Orleans Bowl, 16-3)
Stadium: Cajun Field (36,900)
Tickets: 337-265-2100
Site: Lafayette, La.
Website: ragincajuns.com
Twitter: @ULRaginCajuns

MCGUIRE: ROGELIO V. SOLIS / AP

3 GEORGIA SOUTHERN EAGLES

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@WEST VIRGINIA	
S.12	Western Michigan	
S.19	Citadel	
S.26	@IDAHO	47-24
O.3	@LOUISIANA-MONROE	22-16
O.17	New Mexico State	36-28
O.22	@APPALACHIAN STATE	34-14
O.29	Texas State	28-25
N.14	@TROY	42-10
N.21	@GEORGIA	
N.28	South Alabama	28-6
D.5	Georgia State	69-31

COACH

Willie Fritz
Second year (9-3)
Career record: 146-65
Offensive coordinator: Doug Ruse (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Jack Curtis (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 9-3
Stadium: Allen E. Paulson Stadium (25,000)
Tickets: 800-GSU-WINS
Site: Statesboro, Ga.
Website: gseagles.com
Twitter: @GSAthletics_FB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Kevin Ellison (6-0, 190, Jr.)
RB Matt Breida (5-10, 185, Jr.)
LT Ryan Northrup (6-2, 285, Fr.)
LG Darien Foreman (6-2, 305, Sr.)
C Andy Kwon (6-2, 295, Jr.)
RG Maurice Hunt Jr. (6-1, 290, Sr.)
RT Tommy Boynton (6-4, 305, So.)
WR Ryan Longoria (6-2, 195, Jr.)
WR B.J. Johnson (6-1, 210, Sr.)
WR Derek Keaton (5-10, 180, Sr.)
WR James Dean (6-1, 220, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Bernard Dawson (6-1, 245, Jr.)
DT Jamal Johnson (6-2, 245, Jr.)
NT Jay Ellison (6-1, 305, Jr.)
DE Quan Daniels (6-1, 230, Sr.)
LB Antwione Williams (6-3, 245, Sr.)
LB Deshawntee Gallon (5-9, 205, Sr.)
NB Robert Brice II (5-11, 185, Jr.)
CB Darius Jones Jr. (5-9, 180, Jr.)
CB Caleb Williams (5-9, 170, Sr.)
FS Matt Dobson (6-2, 200, Sr.)
SS Antonio Glover (6-1, 195, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Younghoe Koo (5-10, 190, Jr.)
P Ryan Nowicki (6-1, 200, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

The Georgia Southern club that won the SBC in 2014 didn't exactly utilize the triple option of former glory days, but first-year coach Willie Fritz, with a modernized read-option run from the spread, succeeded nonetheless.

With quarterback Kevin Ellison and running backs Matt Breida and Alfred Ramsby all back after leading the conference in scoring (39.1 points per game) and total offense (488.2 yards per game), and the nation in rushing (381.1 per game), anticipate more of the same.

Breida posted a Sun Belt-leading 1,485 rushing yards, led the nation in rushing average (8.7 per carry) and had a national-high seven TD runs of 50-plus yards.

But also expect more deep throws to receivers like B.J. Johnson, as Fritz seeks 50-to-70 more over-the-top passing yards per game so opponents don't cheat the box.

Georgia Southern loses four starters on the offensive line but adds 6-3, 319-pound Roscoe Byrd (30 starts in three years at UAB) and touted juco transfer Max Magana.

Middle linebacker Edwin Jackson, GSU's top tackler the last two years, also exits, so Antwione Williams slides over from the weakside in a 4-2-5. Returning safety Matt Dobson had two pick-sixes, including a 100-yard return at Texas State, for a secondary that otherwise was a liability. A more aggressive pass rush should help.

BOTTOM LINE: After going 9-3—including 8-0 in its first SBC season, but not going bowling because of FCS transitional status—Georgia Southern looks to ride an already-prolific offense with enhancements to a repeat. Much hinges on changes up front.

4 ARKANSAS STATE RED WOLVES

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@USC	
S.12	Missouri	
S.19	Missouri State	
S.26	@TOLEDO	44-63
O.3	Idaho	44-28
O.13	@SOUTH ALABAMA	45-10
O.20	Louisiana	40-55
O.31	Georgia State	52-10
N.5	@APPALACHIAN STATE	32-37
N.14	@LOUISIANA-MONROE	28-14
N.28	@NEW MEXICO STATE	68-35
D.5	Texas State	27-45

COACH

Blake Anderson
Second year (7-6)
Career record: 7-6
Offensive coordinators: Walt Bell (second year) and Glen Elarbee (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Joe Cauthen (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Toledo in the GoDaddy Bowl, 63-44)
Stadium: Centennial Bank Stadium (30,406)
Tickets: 888-278-3267
Site: Jonesboro, Ark.
Website: astateredwolves.com
Twitter: @AStateRedWolves

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Fredi Knighten (5-11, 189, Sr.)
RB Michael Gordon (5-9, 187, Sr.)
LT Jemar Clark (6-6, 304, Jr.)
LG Steven Stevens (6-4, 296, Sr.)
C Devin Mondie (6-5, 291, Jr.)
RG Daniel Keith (6-2, 275, Fr.)
RT Colton Jackson (6-4, 276, Jr.)
TE Darion Griswold (6-5, 264, Sr.)
WR J.D. McKissic (5-11, 193, Sr.)
WR Tres Houston (6-2, 188, Sr.)
WR Dijon Paschal (6-1, 196, So.)

DEFENSE

DE Chris Stone (6-3, 252, Sr.)
NG Chuks Ota (6-2, 285, So.)
DT Robert Mondie (6-2, 300, Sr.)
DE Ja'Von Rolland-Jones (6-2, 224, So.)
LB Xavier Woodson (6-1, 214, Jr.)
LB Quanterio Heath (5-2, 210, Jr.)
CB Rocky Hayes (5-11, 177, Sr.)
CB Blaise Taylor (5-9, 170, So.)
S Chris Humes (5-11, 207, Jr.)
S Charleston Girley (6-0, 196, Sr.)
S Money Hunter (6-1, 193, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Luke Ferguson (6-0, 210, Sr.)
P Luke Ferguson (6-0, 210, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Arkansas State has made four straight GoDaddy Bowl appearances—and has the same head coach in back-to-back seasons for the first time since 2010.

Whether Blake Anderson can keep the bowling going depends largely on an offense directed by QB Fredi Knighten, who produced a Sun Belt-high 4,056 yards of total offense, including 3,277 through the air, and 24 touchdown throws last season.

With three returning receivers with 600-plus yards' worth of catches last year—Tres Houston (685), Dijon Paschal (642) and slot man J.D. McKissic (629)—Knighten spreads it around. There's also much balance, with returning running back Michael Gordon rushing for 1,100 yards and 13 touchdowns and Knighten another 11 TDs.

On defense, secondary losses from a 4-2-5 base hit the Red Wolves hard. But they're solid up front with end Ja'Von Rolland-Jones (12.0 tackles for loss, 8.0 sacks in 2014) and bandit Chris Stone (10.0, 7.5). Arkansas State also loses Qushaun Lee and his 110 total tackles, but weakside linebacker Xavier Woodson (95 tackles, 9.0 for loss) returns and shifts to Lee's old middle spot. Blaise Taylor is also back after being the SBC's second-leading punt returner in 2014, and is expected to start at cornerback opposite of holdover Rocky Hayes.

BOTTOM LINE: Anderson kept good on his promise to not follow Ole Miss' Hugh Freeze, Auburn's Gus Malzahn and Boise State's Bryan Harsin on the one-and-done sprint away from Arkansas State, and while it may not be as easy as it was previously, he could also keep the bowl run alive.

5 TEXAS STATE BOBCATS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@FLORIDA STATE	
S.12	Prairie View A&M	
S.19	Southern Miss	
S.26	@HOUSTON	
O.10	@LOUISIANA	10-34
O.24	South Alabama	20-24
O.29	@GEORGIA SOUTHERN	25-28
N.7	New Mexico State	37-29
N.14	Georgia State	54-31
N.19	Louisiana-Monroe	22-18
N.28	@IDAHO	35-30
D.5	@ARKANSAS STATE	45-27

COACH

Dennis Franchione
Seventh year (36-34)
Career record: 210-126-2

Offensive coordinators:
Jeff Conway (fourth year) and Mike Schultz (fifth year)
Defensive coordinator:
John Thompson (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 7-5
Stadium: Bobcat Stadium (30,000)
Tickets: 512-245-2272
Site: San Marcos, Texas
Website: txstatebobcats.com
Twitter: @TXSTATEFOOTBALL

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Tyler Jones (6-2, 205, Jr.)
RB Robert Lowe (5-10, 195, Sr.)
LT Adrian Bellard (6-5, 314, Sr.)
LG Brandon Sarabia (6-4, 295, Sr.)
C Jackson Hoskins (6-5, 317, So.)
RG Felix Romero (6-4, 303, Jr.)
RT Ryan Melton (6-5, 325, Jr.)
TE Lawrence White (6-7, 240, Sr.)
WR Jafus Gaines (5-11, 175, Sr.)
WR C.J. Best (5-10, 185, Sr.)
WR Brandon Smith (6-2, 170, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Jeff Banks (6-5, 212, So.)
DT Dallas McClarty (5-11, 275, Jr.)
DT Mershad Dillon (6-3, 300, Sr.)
DE Rusmin Nikocevic (6-4, 258, Sr.)
SLB Stephen Smith (6-3, 221, Jr.)
MLB Trey McGowan (6-0, 247, Sr.)
WLB Camyron Brown (5-11, 199, Fr.)
CB David Mims II (5-11, 198, Sr.)
CB Brandon McDowell (5-10, 183, So.)
FS Dila Rosemond (5-10, 175, So.)
SS Damani Alexcee (6-2, 192, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K James Sherman (5-10, 180, Fr.)
P James Sherman (5-10, 180, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

After going 7-5 but not getting a bowl bid last season, Texas State–and especially coach Dennis Franchione–is looking to erase all doubts in 2015.

With seven offensive starters and five defensive starters back, the Bobcats seek to shed the shoulder chip stemming from the snub.

Quarterback Tyler Jones, who threw for 2,670 yards and 22 touchdowns and completed 65.4 percent of his passes last season, returns as a junior with a year-and-a-half of starting experience. Tailback Robert Lowe had 20 starts in his first two years at Texas State, and surpassed the 1,000-yard plateau after coming up 55 yards short in 2013. The Bobcats also return three starting offensive linemen, including 6-5, 314-pound senior tackle Adrian Bellard, another two-year starter, and much-improved tackle Ryan Melton.

The Bobcats sustained heavy defensive losses, however, including linebacker David Mayo, the Sun Belt's 2014 Defensive Player of the Year with 154 total tackles, along with cornerback Craig Mager (3 interceptions) and lineman Michael Odiari (9.0 sacks). But corner David Mims II, who had a team-high five picks, is back, and Brandon McDowell, the Bobcats' most improved defensive player this spring, should slide into Mager's spot.

Another big loss for Texas State is that of graduated punter/kicker Will Johnson, who was one of the SBC's best.

BOTTOM LINE: A tough test awaits against Florida State in the opener, but if the defense can handle the changes the Bobcats–bowl-eligible but with no bowl to go to the last two years–may contend again.

6 TROY TROJANS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@N.C. STATE	
S.12	Charleston Southern	
S.19	@WISCONSIN	
O.3	South Alabama	13-27
O.10	@MISSISSIPPI STATE	
O.17	Idaho	34-17
O.24	@NEW MEXICO STATE	41-24
O.31	@APPALACHIAN STATE	14-53
N.7	Louisiana-Monroe	20-22
N.14	Georgia Southern	10-42
N.27	@GEORGIA STATE	45-21
D.5	@LOUISIANA	23-42

COACH

Neal Brown
First year

Offensive coordinators:
Kenny Edenfield (sixth year) and Matt Moore (first year)
Defensive coordinator:
Vic Koenning (first year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 3-9
Stadium: Veterans Memorial Stadium (30,000)
Tickets: 877-878-WINS
Site: Troy, Ala.
Website: troytrojans.com
Twitter: @TroyAthletics

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Brandon Silvers (6-3, 202, So.)
RB Brandon Burks (5-9, 201, Sr.)
LT Antonio Garcia (6-7, 295, Jr.)
LG Luke Lawrence (6-3, 309, Jr.)
C Dalton Bennett (6-3, 292, Jr.)
RG Johnathan Boring (6-5, 306, Jr.)
RT David Gross (6-5, 308, Jr.)
WR Jarvis Bentley (6-5, 188, Sr.)
WR Teddy Ruben (5-7, 156, Sr.)
WR K.D. Edenfield (6-0, 194, Sr.)
WR Bryan Holmes (5-10, 174, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE Rashad Dillard (6-1, 258, Jr.)
DT Garrett Peek (6-3, 292, Jr.)
NG Lonnie Gosha (6-3, 306, Sr.)
BAN Tyler Roberts (6-2, 230, Sr.)
WLB William Lloyd (6-0, 198, Jr.)
MLB Justin Lucas (5-10, 231, Jr.)
SLB Darrin Reddick (6-0, 200, Sr.)
CB Jalen Rountree (5-11, 159, Jr.)
CB LaMarcus Farmer (6-0, 167, Sr.)
FS Montres Kitchens (6-0, 180, Sr.)
SS Rod Adams (6-2, 185, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Ryan Kay (6-2, 203, Jr.)
P Ryan Kay (6-2, 203, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

Coach Larry Blakeney retired after 24 seasons at Troy with a 178-113-1 record, eight Sun Belt/Southland Conference titles, seven FCS playoff appearances, two bowl wins and the satisfaction of overseeing a program's transition from Division 2 to the FBS.

Inheriting a 3-9 team with 15 returning starters is former Troy, Texas Tech and Kentucky offensive coordinator Neal Brown, who left his SEC post with the Wildcats after five seasons away from southern Alabama.

Among the offensive returnees: quarterback Brandon Silvers, who completed an NCAA freshman-record 70.5 percent of his passes to top ex-Oklahoma and current NFL quarterback Sam Bradford's 69.5 in 2007; top two rushers Brandon Burks and Jordan Chunn; and wideout Bryan Holmes, who had five TDs and averaged 13.9 yards on 34 receptions in 2014. They'll run an uptempo spread more complex than Blakeney's offense.

Troy's defense–also more complex, and designed to deal with the spread that so many Sun Belt offenses run–is led by top tackler Montres Kitchens, a safety who had 88 tackles and five interceptions (including a pick-six) last year, and bandit Tyler Roberts (5.0 sacks). Justin Lucas moves to middle linebacker, and the unit should get a boost from East Mississippi Community College's top three tacklers last season, Junior College All-America defensive back Demetrius Cain and linebackers William Lloyd and Justin Lucas.

BOTTOM LINE: Troy went 2-1 and averaged 34.0 points in its final three games of 2014, so if the offense evolves under Brown, perhaps that will expedite improvement. Visits to N.C. State, Wisconsin and Mississippi State, however, could limit the win count.

7 SOUTH ALABAMA
JAGUARS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Gardner-Webb	
S.12	@NEBRASKA	
S.19	@SAN DIEGO STATE	
S.26	N.C. State	
O.3	@TROY	27-13
O.13	Arkansas State	10-45
O.24	@TEXAS STATE	24-20
N.7	Idaho	34-10
N.12	Louisiana	9-19
N.21	@GEORGIA STATE	30-27
N.28	@GEORGIA SOUTHERN	6-28
D.5	Appalachian State	47-21

COACH
Joey Jones
Seventh year (37-28)
Career record: 37-28
Offensive coordinator: Bryant Vincent (first year)
Defensive coordinator: Travis Pearson (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to Bowling Green in the Camellia Bowl, 33-28)
Stadium: Ladd-Peebles Stadium (40,000)
Tickets: 251-461-1USA
Site: Mobile, Ala.
Website: usajaguars.com
Twitter: @USAJaguarSports

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Cody Clements (6-2, 200, Jr.)
RB Terrance Timmons (5-7, 180, Jr.)
LT Daniel Aust (6-2, 280, So.)
LG Harrison Louden (6-3, 290, Fr.)
C Joseph Scelfo (6-1, 300, So.)
RG Cameron Blankenship (6-5, 285, Jr.)
RT Chris May (6-5, 290, Jr.)
TE Braedon Bowman (6-4, 220, Jr.)
WR Tyrone Williams (6-2, 200, So.)
WR D.J. Vinson (5-10, 200, Jr.)
WR Danny Woodson II (6-1, 200, Jr.)

DEFENSE
DE Jimmie Gipson III (6-0, 255, Jr.)
NT Tre Alford (5-10, 295, Fr.)
DT Caleb Butler (6-4, 250, Fr.)
DE Akeem Lewis (6-2, 250, Jr.)
LB Demarius Rancifer (6-4, 205, Jr.)
LB Blake Dees (6-0, 245, Sr.)
NB Jeremy Reaves (5-11, 180, Fr.)
CB Margo Reed (5-7, 165, Jr.)
CB E.J. May (5-10, 180, Jr.)
FS Terrance Slaughter (5-9, 200, Jr.)
SS Roman Buchanan (6-2, 210, So.)

SPECIALISTS
K Aleem Sunanon (5-7, 170, So.)
P Brandon McKee (6-1, 185, So.)

Sporting News All-American

After winning five of seven early last year, South Alabama dropped five of six late–including a Camellia Bowl loss to Bowling Green, its first postseason appearance. Now coach Joey Jones' Jaguars, returning just seven starters, face a new definition of loss: They're without 32 seniors from 2014.

Eight scholarship players and two walk-ons transferring from the now-defunct UAB football program will cushion the blow. Two of them–injured quarterback Cody Clements and linebacker Kalen Jackson–missed spring practice. But Clements is expected to replace big-armed Brandon Bridge, who threw for 2,227 yards and 14 touchdowns and completed 66.5 percent of his passes as a senior last year.

Clements is well acquainted with the offense of coordinator Bryant Vincent, an ex-Jaguars quarterbacks coach who served as UAB's last offensive coordinator. They will be surrounded by familiar faces.

D.J. Vinson was UAB's second-leading rusher last season, but he'll play slot receiver for the Jags. Ex-Blazer Cameron Blankenship will start at guard between Chris May (South Alabama's three-year starting tackle) and center Joseph Scelfo.

Defensively, inside linebacker Blake Dees, a transfer from Texas Tech, sat out 2014 but could be a difference-maker after three years in Lubbock. Starting safety Roman Buchanan returns, and pass-rushing end Jimmie Gipson III (6.5 tackles for loss) is South Alabama's top returnee on the line.

Kicker Aleem Sunanon has led USA in scoring the past two years, including 15-of-18 on field-goal tries in 2014.

BOTTOM LINE: South Alabama has been bowl-eligible two straight seasons and had a winning SBC record for two straight, too, but unless Clements shines and the defense matures fast, three in a row could prove difficult.

8 LOUISIANA-MONROE
WARHAWKS

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@GEORGIA	
S.12	Nicholls State	
S.26	@ALABAMA	
O.3	Georgia Southern	16-22
O.10	@TULSA	
O.17	Appalachian State	29-31
O.24	@IDAHO	38-31
O.31	@LOUISIANA	27-34
N.7	@TROY	22-20
N.14	Arkansas State	14-28
N.39	@TEXAS STATE	18-22
N.28	@HAWAII	
D.5	New Mexico State	30-17

COACH
Todd Berry
Sixth year (27-34)
Career record: 56-93
Offensive coordinator: Steve Farmer (sixth year)
Defensive coordinators: Travis Niekamp (first year) and Adam Waugh (first year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 4-8
Stadium: Malone Stadium (30,427)
Tickets: 318-342-3ULM
Site: Monroe, La.
Website: ulmwarhawks.com
Twitter: @ULMWarhawks

PROJECTED STARTERS
OFFENSE
QB Brayle Brown (6-2, 207, Sr.)
RB Kaylon Watson (6-1, 223, So.)
LT Rey Baltazar (6-6, 303, Jr.)
LG Frank Sutton Jr. (6-4, 295, So.)
C Colby Mitchell (6-2, 280, Sr.)
RG Jake Snyder (6-2, 285, Fr.)
RT Chase Regian (6-3, 296, So.)
TE Harley Scioneaux (6-6, 253, Sr.)
WR Ajalen Holley (5-10, 197, Jr.)
WR Tyler Cain (5-8, 187, Sr.)
WR Rashon Ceaser (6-0, 196, Sr.)

DEFENSE
DE Ben Banogu (6-4, 250, Fr.)
NT Gerrand Johnson (6-1, 290, Sr.)
DE Lorenzo Jackson (6-2, 244, Sr.)
LB Michael Johnson (6-2, 232, Sr.)
LB Hunter Kissinger (6-3, 237, Sr.)
LB Cody Robinson (6-1, 226, Sr.)
NB Mitch Lane (6-1, 215, Sr.)
CB Trey Caldwell (5-9, 192, Sr.)
CB Lenzy Pipkins (6-1, 197, Jr.)
S Tre' Hunter (6-0, 186, Jr.)
S Justin Backus (6-2, 190, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS
K Craig Ford (6-2, 166, Fr.)
P Chris Qualls (5-9, 166, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

Louisiana-Monroe's defense is loaded with seven returning multi-year starters, including one rather big one in nose tackle Gerrand Johnson, who last season became the first defensive lineman to lead ULM in total tackles since 1980. He had 93, 12.5 of them tackles for loss.

Hawk safety Mitch Lane, just like Johnson, will be a fourth-year starter. The Warhawks' linebacking trio of Hunter Kissinger, Michael Johnson and Cody Robinson returns intact for a defense expected to play a more-simple version of its blitz-heavy 3-3-5 scheme after longtime coordinator Troy Reffett took an assistant's job at Memphis. Adam Waugh and Travis Niekamp become co-coordinators.

Head coach Todd Berry takes over play-calling duties from coordinator Steve Farmer for an offense whose 2014 backup quarterback, Brayle Brown, emerged from spring practice listed No. 1. Redshirt freshman Garrett Smith leads the group pushing Brown, who loses Kenzee Jackson (79 catches, 866 yards) but will have receivers Rashon Ceaser (77, 872) and Ajalen Holley (57 catches, 873 yards, 15.1 yards per reception, 7 TDs) both back. With pocket passer Pete Thomas gone after one year as a graduate transfer from N.C. State, Berry is returning to the spread offense ULM used when Kolton Browning was QB.

Ceaser led the SBC in punt-return average last season. But with dependable, dual-use Justin Manton having used up his eligibility, ULM breaks in a new kicker, Craig Ford, and punter, high school signee Chris Qualls.

BOTTOM LINE: The Warhawks, coming off a disappointing 4-8 season and opening against Georgia, are banking that experience on defense will pay big dividends.

9 GEORGIA STATE
PANTHERS

At Georgia State, which has one victory in two seasons under Trent Miles and just two wins in three years, Nick Arbuckle led the SBC in passing yards per game (273.6) in 2014 and threw for 23 touchdowns. But he was picked 17 times, something to shore up in 2015.

Targets include wideouts Donovan Harden (885 receiving yards, 7 TDs in 2014), Robert Davis (732 yards) and talented tight end Joel Ruiz (coming off knee surgery).

But Miles seeks an improved ground game after averaging an FBS-low 96.3 rushing yards per game. He's now coaching the running backs group, which gets a lift from the return of Kyler Neal (season-ending knee injury early in 2014) and newcomers Kendrick Dorn (1,000-yard juco rusher last year) and Demarcus Kirk (2014 UAB redshirt).

Neal

Linebacker Joseph Peterson, GSU's top tackler the last three years, returns for a defense that has eight midyear enrollees, including UAB transfers Alonzo McGee (outside linebacker), Bobby Baker (safety) and Demarco Davis (cornerback) and juco transfer Kaleb Ringer, a linebacker and ex-Michigan signee. One notable move: Outside linebacker Mackendy Cheridor drops to down defensive end.

BOTTOM LINE: The Panthers must trim turnovers and stop the run to grow wins.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.5	Charlotte
S.12	@ NEW MEXICO STATE
S.19	@ OREGON
O.3	Liberty
O.10	Appalachian State
O.17	@ BALL STATE
O.31	@ ARKANSAS STATE
N.7	Louisiana
N.14	@ TEXAS STATE
N.21	South Alabama
N.27	Troy
D.5	@ GEORGIA SOUTHERN

QUICK HITS — **2014 RECORD: 1-11**

Coach: Trent Miles (Third year, 1-23)
Career record: 21-59
Offensive coordinator: Jeff Jagodzinski (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Jesse Minter (third year)

Stadium: Georgia Dome (28,155)
Tickets: 866-GA-STATE
Site: Atlanta
Website: georgiastatesports.com
Twitter: @GSUPanthers

10 NEW MEXICO STATE
AGGIES

Tyler Rogers completed 61.5 percent of his passes but was intercepted an FBS-worst 23 times last season, so New Mexico State coach Doug Martin is now handling offensive coordinator and QB-coaching duties as the Aggies try to spread things out and clean them up.

Receiver Teldrick Morgan returns with 75 catches for 903 yards and seven touchdowns from 2014, and Larry Rose III is back after rushing for 1,102 yards in just 10 games as a freshman. Additional help could come from juco transfer Tyrian Taylor, a speedy receiver from Elsworth (Iowa) CC. The offensive line loses only center Valerian Ume-Ezeoke, but he was a key starter.

The Aggies return their top four tacklers from last season in linebackers Rodney Butler, Derek Ibekwe and Dalton Herrington and safety Kawe Johnson. Also back for what may be a more aggressive unit in 2015 is cornerback Winston Rose, who had a team-high five interceptions last year.

Morgan

BOTTOM LINE: Nonconference road games at Florida and Ole Miss won't make things any easier for NMSU, which went 2-10 in 2014 and has just five wins over the last three years. Martin knew there would be growing pains, though, as he builds methodically instead of seeking the quick fix.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.5	@ FLORIDA
S.12	Georgia State
S.19	UTEP
O.3	@ NEW MEXICO
O.10	@ OLE MISS
O.17	@ GEORGIA SOUTHERN
O.24	Troy
O.31	Idaho
N.7	@ TEXAS STATE
N.21	@ LOUISIANA
N.28	Arkansas State
D.5	@ LOUISIANA-MONROE

QUICK HITS — **2014 RECORD: 2-10**

Coach: Doug Martin (Third year, 4-20)
Career record: 33-73
Offensive coordinator: Doug Martin (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Zane Vance (first year)

Stadium: Aggie Memorial Stadium (30,343)
Tickets: 575-646-1420
Site: Las Cruces, N.M.
Website: nmstatesports.com
Twitter: @NMStateAggies

11 IDAHO
VANDALS

After throwing for 2,515 yards but getting intercepted 18 times as a 2014 freshman, bulked-up Matt Linehan–son of ex-St. Louis Rams head coach and current Dallas Cowboys offensive coordinator Scott Linehan–returns for coach Paul Petrino.

He'll be backed up by big redshirt freshman Jake Luton, who has a lively arm but less experience.

The quarterbacks will have a weapon in Dezmon Epps, who had 980 receiving yards in 2013, was booted from the team in 2014 and has won his way back on. To add speed, ex-receivers Deon Watson and Buck Cowan are transitioning to tight end.

When Idaho's offense falters, punter Austin Rehkow can be a real weapon. He led the FBS in punting two years ago and finished second with a 47.8-yard average last season as a sophomore.

Epps

With more speed wanted on the other other side too, presumed new defensive coordinator Mike Breske is expected to bring the 3-4 base he used before getting fired at Washington State after last season. Chris Edwards moves from defensive back to linebacker, where he should join vets Marc Millan (102 total tackles, 14.5 for loss) and Broc Westlake.

BOTTOM LINE: Petrino feels his Vandals are faster and stronger. But after three straight one-win seasons, vast improvement may take even more than that.

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	Ohio
S.12	@ USC
S.19	Wofford
S.26	Georgia Southern
O.3	@ ARKANSAS STATE
O.17	@ TROY
O.24	Louisiana-Monroe
O.31	@ NEW MEXICO STATE
N.7	@ SOUTH ALABAMA
N.14	Appalachian State
N.21	@ AUBURN
N.28	Texas State

QUICK HITS — **2014 RECORD: 1-10**

Coach: Paul Petrino (Third year, 2-21)
Career record: 2-21
Offensive coordinator: Kris Cinkovich (third year)
Defensive coordinator: Mike Breske (first year)

Stadium: Kibbie Dome (16,000)
Tickets: (208) 885-6466
Site: Moscow, Idaho
Website: govandals.com
Twitter: @Idaho_Vandals

NEAL: ELAINE THOMPSON / AP; MORGAN: ANDRES LEIGHTON / AP; EPPS: DEAN HARE / AP

NOTRE DAME
FIGHTING IRISH

BOWL PROJECTION: Russell Athletic Bowl

Will Fuller

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	Texas	
S.12	@VIRGINIA	
S.19	Georgia Tech	
S.26	Massachusetts	
O.3	@CLEMSON	
O.10	Navy	49-39
O.17	USC	14-49
O.31	@TEMPLE	
N.7	@PITTSBURGH	
N.14	Wake Forest	
N.21	Boston College (at Boston, MA)	
N.28	@STANFORD	17-14

COACH
Brian Kelly
Sixth year (45-20)
Career record: 216-77-2

Offensive coordinator:
Mike Sanford (first year)
Defensive coordinator:
Brian VanGorder (second year)

FAST FACTS
2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat LSU in the Music City Bowl, 31-28)
Stadium: Notre Dame Stadium (80,795)
Tickets: 574-631-7356
Site: South Bend, Ind.
Website: und.com
Twitter: @NDFootball

Camouflaged by the quarterback quandary are the real questions the Notre Dame football team must answer.

The ball-security struggles that Everett Golson (22 turnovers, 14 interceptions, 8 fumbles) had last season–and the success the Irish had in a tag-team situation with Golson and Malik Zaire in the Music City Bowl win over LSU–opened up the prospects for a quarterback controversy heading into the 2015 opener with Texas.

But that's hardly the biggest fish Irish coach Brian Kelly has to fry. It's just the one that will get the most media attention.

For the record, Kelly doesn't appear ready to give up on Golson. Zaire played well against LSU, but there's no substitute for two years as a starter in some pretty big games.

If the other areas of concern could only be solved so easily ...

Kelly has a coaching staff loaded with new faces (four) and only one assistant–Harry Hiestand on the offensive line–who was working at the same position last year.

Big-name hires are running backs coach Autry Denson, who became Notre Dame's all-time leading rusher (4,448 yards) in 1998. Also, two-time All-American Todd Lyght returns to his alma mater as secondary coach.

Mike Sanford brings fresh blood from Boise State as Notre Dame's new offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach. Brian VanGorder, in his second year as defensive coordinator, moves from his linebackers position to more of a roving eye, with an emphasis on the secondary.

The new assistant with the critical assignment is Keith Gilmore, who came from North Carolina. A longtime friend of Kelly's–he was with him when he was head coach at Grand Valley State, Central Michigan and Cincinnati–Gilmore is a specialist on the defensive line.

Gilmore is charged with adding some punch to a defensive front that generated

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Will Fuller, WR

The speedy Fuller was known before last season as a deep threat. With Everett Golson back at QB in 2014, Fuller also showed himself to be a go-to option on any given pass play. While four other Irish receivers had 29 or more receptions, Fuller's 76 were 36 more than any other teammate and his 15 receiving touchdowns were third in the FBS. The Golson-Fuller combo should have another prolific season.

FULLER: JOE RAYMOND / AP

just 26 sacks and 73 tackles for loss through an 8-5 season in 2014. Injuries, early departures to the NFL and a couple of transfers conspired to turn what could have been a dominant part of the Irish defense into something young and porous.

Besides getting better in the pursuit of the quarterback, progress must be made against the run. Notre Dame gave up an average yield of 171.2 yards on the ground last year.

The best place to start is with veterans. Sheldon Day, the best of the lot, is back inside along with Jarron Jones, who missed the end of last season with a foot injury. Isaac Rochell, Romeo Okwara, Andrew Trumbetti and Grant Blankenship are all outside guys who have been through the wars.

Injuries to Jarrett Grace (midway through the 2013 campaign) and Joe Schmidt (midseason 2014) caused linebacker to be an area of concern late last year. All-American Jaylon Smith was asked to shoulder most of the burden. Grace and Schmidt are both back, Nyles Morgan got plenty of experience as a freshman and Smith is among the nation's elite again. That means linebacker will be a strength in South Bend this year.

The key for the Irish secondary is the return of cornerback KeiVarae Russell, who missed last season because of an academic situation. He has the chops to be one of the best in the business. Kelly said in late March that Russell was making good academic progress toward rejoining the team in the fall.

A solid offensive line will give Golson (and/or Zaire) and a load of talented skill-position players plenty of opportunities to succeed.

Tarean Folston and Greg Bryant could emerge as one of the most dynamic rushing combos in the country. Will Fuller, Chris Brown and Corey Robinson all have what it takes to evolve into big-time receivers.

For the first time in a few years, the kicking game is a question. Kyle Brindza, a four-year guy who did both, is gone. True freshman Justin Yoon will likely take over as the kicker and Tyler Newsome is the punter.

BOTTOM LINE

Notre Dame's 12-1 season in 2012 is a distant memory, but this Irish team is good enough for double-digit wins and a spot in the College Football Playoff.

–Al Lesar

RECRUITING REPORT '24 SPORTS

Notre Dame finished with 24 recruits and the nation's No. 13 recruiting class according to 247Sports, highlighted by four Top 100 signees and six more ranked in the Top247 by 247Sports. Coach Brian Kelly and his staff have as deep and talented a roster as they've had since arriving in South Bend and this class will supplement the team with immediate difference-makers such as defensive lineman Jerry Tillery and cornerback Shaun Crawford. The Irish are bringing in a balanced class led by jewel Brandon Wimbush, a former Penn State commit and arguably the top quarterback recruit in the country.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. Brandon Wimbush, QB ★★★★
2. Aliz'e Jones, TE ★★★★
3. Tristen Hoge, OL ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Everett Golson	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	13	143.6	256-427-14	60.0	3,445	29	265.0

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Tarean Folston	13	175	889	5.1	6	68.4

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Will Fuller	13	76	1,094	14.4	15	84.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jaylon Smith	13	65	47	112

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Romeo Okwara	13	4.0	38

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Cole Luke	4	13	3.2	0

MASCOT: PETER MORRISON / AP

BEHIND THE MASK

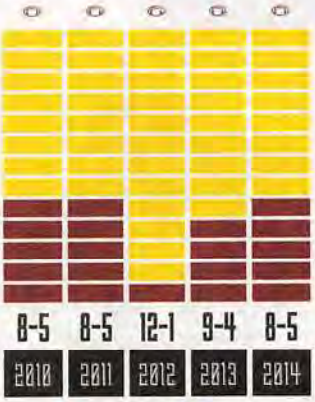
The **Leprechaun**, named Notre Dame's official mascot in 1965 after replacing the Irish terrier, brandishes a shillelagh and supposedly brings good luck and magical powers to the Fighting Irish.

2014 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	ND	OPP
SCORING	427	379
Points Per Game	32.8	29.2
FIRST DOWNS	309	278
Rushing	117	126
Passing	168	136
Penalty	24	16
RUSHING YARDAGE	2073	2225
Yards gained rushing	2445	2572
Yards lost rushing	372	347
Rushing Attempts	484	525
Average Per Rush	4.3	4.2
Average Per Game	159.5	171.2
TDs Rushing	24	21
PASSING YARDAGE	3711	3029
Comp-Att-Int	277-463-14	249-413-16
Average Per Pass	8.0	7.3
Average Per Catch	13.4	12.2
Average Per Game	285.5	233.0
TDs Passing	30	23
TOTAL OFFENSE	5784	5254
Total Plays	947	938
Average Per Play	6.1	5.6
Average Per Game	444.9	404.2
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	45-921	26-609
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	23-195	9-48
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	16-138	14-301
KICK RETURN AVG.	20.5	23.4
PUNT RETURN AVG.	8.5	5.3
INT RETURN AVG.	8.6	21.5
FUMBLES-LOST	24-12	13-7
PENALTIES-YARDS	58-487	79-696
Average Per Game	37.5	53.5
PUNTS-YARDS	51-2115	55-2269
Average Per Punt	41.5	41.3
Net punt average	37.8	37.0
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:51	30:09
3RD-DOWN CONV.	90/190	79/192
3rd-Down Pct.	47%	41%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	8/16	11/24
4th-Down Pct.	50%	46%
SACKS BY-YARDS	26-200	28-208
MISC YARDS	26	39
TDS SCORED	55	49
FG-ATTEMPTS	14-24	12-20
ATTENDANCE	484770	227887
Games/Avg Per Game	6/80795	3/75962
Neutral Site Games		4/57715

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Notre Dame	89	142	87	109	0	427
Opponent	117	93	76	90	3	379

5-YEAR RECORD 45-20



DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Everett Golson (6-0, 200, Gr.)
	Malik Zaire (6-0, 222, Jr.)
RB	Tarean Folston (5-10, 214, Jr.)
	Greg Bryant (5-10, 205, Jr.)
LT	Ronnie Stanley (6-6, 315, Sr.)
	Hunter Bivin (6-6, 302, Jr.)
LG	Quenton Nelson (6-5, 325, So.)
	Alex Bars (6-6, 316, So.)
C	Nick Martin (6-5, 301, Gr.)
	Sam Mustipher (6-2, 305, So.)
RG	Steve Elmer (6-6, 315, Jr.)
	John Montelus (6-4, 310, Jr.)
RT	Mike McGlinchey (6-8, 310, Jr.)
	Mark Harrell (6-4, 306, Sr.)
TE	Durham Smythe (6-5, 245, Jr.)
	Tyler Luatua (6-3, 250, So.)
WR	Chris Brown (6-2, 195, Sr.)
	Corey Robinson (6-5, 215, Jr.)
WR	Will Fuller (6-0, 180, Jr.)
	Corey Holmes (6-1, 184, So.)
WR	Amir Carlisle (5-10, 192, Gr.)
	C.J. Prosise (6-1, 220, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Romeo Okwara (6-4, 260, Sr.)
	Andrew Trumbetti (6-4, 255, So.)
DT	Sheldon Day (6-2, 285, Sr.)
	Jay Hayes (6-3, 285, So.)
NG	Jarron Jones (6-6, 315, Sr.)
	Jacob Matuska (6-5, 295, Jr.)
DE	Isaac Rochell (6-4, 287, Jr.)
	Grant Blankenship (6-5, 252, So.)
OLB	James Onwualu (6-1, 220, Jr.)
	Greer Martini (6-3, 240, So.)
ILB	Joe Schmidt (6-1, 235, Gr.)
	Nyles Morgan (6-1, 237, So.)
OLB	Jaylon Smith (6-3, 235, Jr.)
	Te'Von Coney (6-0, 230, Fr.)
CB	KeiVarae Russell (5-11, 190, Sr.)
	Nick Watkins (6-0, 200, So.)
CB	Cole Luke (5-11, 190, Jr.)
	Devin Butler (6-1, 195, Jr.)
FS	Max Redfield (6-1, 198, Jr.)
	Matthias Farley (5-11, 205, Gr.)
SS	Elijah Shumate (6-0, 213, Sr.)
	Drue Tranquill (6-2, 225, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Justin Yoon (5-11, 185, Fr.)
P	Tyler Newsome (6-3, 205, So.)

Sporting News All-American

BYU COUGARS

BOWL PROJECTION:
Poinsettia Bowl

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.5	@NEBRASKA	
S.12	Boise State	30-55
S.19	@UCLA	
S.26	@MICHIGAN	
O.2	Connecticut	35-10
O.10	East Carolina	
O.17	Cincinnati	
O.24	Wagner	
N.6	@SAN JOSE STATE	
N.14	Missouri (at Kansas City, MO)	
N.21	Fresno State	
N.28	@UTAH STATE	20-35

COACH

Bronco Mendenhall
11th year (90-39)
Career record: 90-39

Offensive coordinator:
Robert Anae (ninth year)
Defensive coordinator:
Nick Howell (third year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Memphis in the Miami Beach Bowl, 55-48)
Stadium: LaVell Edwards Stadium (63,470)
Tickets: 800-422-BYU-1
Site: Provo, Utah
Website: byucougars.com
Twitter: @BYUfootball

Bronson Kaufusi

Mitch Mathews

Independence has its perks and its drawbacks.

BYU's football team will experience one of the rough patches as the 2015 season begins.

The Cougars, restocked from an 8-5 season a year ago, start with a murderer's row of a schedule that includes trips to Nebraska, UCLA and Michigan plus a home date with Boise State.

If BYU is still focused and heading in a positive direction by Week Five, the Cougars could be in line for something special to happen.

One sure way for the season to stay on track would be to keep quarterback Taysom Hill upright.

Hill went down five games into last season with a fractured leg and ligament damage. At the time he was averaging 92 yards rushing and 195 passing per game. The key for coach Bronco Mendenhall this season is to convince Hill that sliding before contact, or running out of bounds, might be the better part of valor.

Easier said than done. Avoiding contact is not in Hill's DNA.

Along with Hill, another dynamic offensive weapon will be running back Jamaal Williams, who rushed for 74 yards a game last season.

Five key leaders from last year's defense exhausted their eligibility. That leaves plenty of opportunities for veterans to ascend into much more significant roles.

Kai Nacua, a safety who had 40 tackles and two interceptions, will be the leader of the secondary. Linebackers Bronson Kaufusi (43 tackles, 7 sacks) and Manoa Pikula (49 tackles) will make sure everyone is where they're supposed to be. Along the defensive front, Remington Peck (24 tackles) is poised to emerge as a force at end.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Mitch Mathews, WR

The QB position was a little shaky in Provo last year after a midseason injury to starter Taysom Hill and a couple of rough outings for his replacement, Christian Stewart. Mathews was consistent throughout at receiver, though, and gave the passing game some stability with 73 catches and 922 receiving yards. He should help Hill get back to form quickly in 2015.

BOTTOM LINE

It doesn't take a football genius to figure out that BYU's fortunes rest firmly on the shoulders of Hill. Keeping him healthy and allowing him to be productive will be the key to surviving the rough start and flourishing the rest of the way.

–Al Lesar

5-YEAR RECORD 41-24

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB Taysom Hill (6-2, 232, Sr.)
RB Jamaal Williams (6-0, 206, Sr.)
FB Algernon Brown (6-1, 229, Jr.)
LT Ryker Mathews (6-6, 320, Sr.)
LG Kyle Johnson (6-4, 303, Jr.)
C Tejan Koroma (6-0, 280, So.)
RG Tuni Kanuch (6-3, 325, So.)
RT Brad Wilcox (6-7, 305, Jr.)
TE Bryan Sampson (6-4, 221, Jr.)
WR Terenn Houk (6-5, 223, Sr.)
WR Mitch Mathews (6-6, 215, Sr.)

DEFENSE

LE Graham Rowley (6-4, 280, Sr.)
NT Travis Tuiloma (6-2, 285, Jr.)
RE Remington Peck (6-5, 271, Sr.)
OLB Fred Warner (6-3, 220, So.)
MLB Teu Kautai (6-1, 231, Sr.)
ILB Manoa Pikula (6-1, 235, Sr.)
OLB Bronson Kaufusi (6-7, 265, Sr.)
CB Michael Davis (6-2, 181, Jr.)
CB Jordan Preator (6-0, 183, So.)
SS Kai Nacua (6-1, 207, Jr.)
FS Eric Takenaka (5-10, 205, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K Trevor Samson (5-11, 183, Sr.)
P Chasen Brown (6-0, 173, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

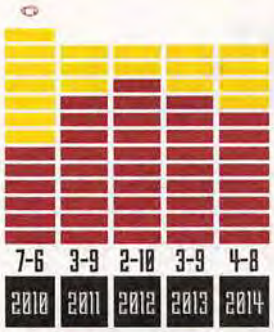
1 **Kieffer Longson,** OG ★★★
2 **Mika Tafua,** DE ★★★
3 **Dayan Lake,** CB ★★★

Brigham Young likes to take chances in its recruiting process and there's no bigger example of that (literally) than 6-7, 410-pound Tongan signee Motekiai Langi, who has virtually no football experience. More traditional signees who could make some noise in Provo include Hawaiian defensive end Mika Tafua, California offensive guard Kieffer Longson and in-state cornerback Dayan Lake. The Cougars also have a tendency to get the most out of guys like 6-6 defensive end Devin Kaufusi.

MATHEWS: FRED BECKHAM / AP; KAUFUSI: RICK BOWMER / AP

ARMY
BLACK KNIGHTS

5-YEAR RECORD 19-42



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

- **QB** A.J. Schurr (6-0, 209, Sr.)
- **RB** Joe Walker (6-0, 199, Jr.)
- **RB** Matt Giachinta (6-1, 224, Sr.)
- **TE** Kelvin White (6-3, 241, Sr.)
- **LT** Drew Hennessy (6-7, 283, Sr.)
- **LG** Jaryn Villegas (6-2, 294, So.)
- **C** Matt Hugenberg (6-5, 309, Sr.)
- **RG** Bryce Holland (6-2, 265, So.)
- **RT** Mike Houghton (6-4, 257, So.)
- **WR** Edgar Poe (6-4, 222, Jr.)
- **WR** Xavier Moss (6-2, 197, Jr.)

DEFENSE

- **LE** John Voit (6-3, 237, So.)
- **NG** T.J. Atimalala (5-11, 264, Sr.)
- **DT** Jordan Smith (6-3, 254, Jr.)
- **RE** Seth Combs (6-0, 218, Jr.)
- **OLB** Andrew King (6-0, 235, Jr.)
- **ILB** Jeremy Timpf (6-1, 225, Jr.)
- **ILB** Scott Washle (6-1, 229, So.)
- **CB** Josh Jenkins (6-0, 196, Jr.)
- **CB** Chris Carnegie (6-0, 200, Sr.)
- **S** Luke Proulx (5-10, 196, Sr.)
- **S** Rhyan England (5-10, 186, So.)

SPECIALISTS

- **K** Daniel Grochowski (6-1, 226, Sr.)
- **P** Alex Tardieu (6-4, 222, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT 247 SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES (247 Star Rating)

1. **Kenneth Brinson,** DE ★★★
2. **James Gibson,** S ★★★
3. **Kelvin Hopkins,** QB ★★

Recruiting to Army, you better find some diamonds-in-the-rough and coach Jeff Monken was able to find his fair share in this 2015 effort. With offers from the likes of Boston College, Georgia Tech and Wake Forest, DE Kenneth Brinson doesn't quite fit into that profile. There are a few other incoming prospects who fit that mold, like undersized but productive athlete Malik McGue and a big linebacker out of Texas, Corey Sanders.

Jeremy Timpf

Army coach Jeff Monken is working with admittedly less talent than last year's 4-8 squad, but he says the Black Knights could be a better team fundamentally.

Still, the Paul Johnson disciple, who coached under his mentor for eight years at Navy and Georgia Tech, won't sugarcoat anything: "We're not very good. We won 12 games in the last four years. I wish I could snap my fingers and make us better overnight, but I can't. It's going to take time."

The flexbone triple-option offense that Monken learned under Johnson (and employed as head coach at Georgia Southern from 2010-13) loses five of its top six rushers from last year, including three running backs who rushed for 1,000 yards in a season at some point in their careers. Senior quarterback A.J. Schurr and junior running back Joe Walker are the only backs on the roster with game experience in 2014. As a backup QB, Schurr averaged 7.1 yards per carry and was the team's fourth-leading rusher. Walker is an unknown even to Monken, having spent most of his time on special teams, but his two rushing touchdowns out of a mere 18 attempts may be a good sign.

The most important returnee on the offensive line is 6-5, 309-pound senior Matt Hugenberg, who played every offensive snap last year. Six other linemen received starting experience but it was more as a byproduct of the unit's inconsistency (10 different starting lineups in 12 games).

A testament to the subpar play on both sides of the ball, the Black Knights allowed 50 of a potential 56 red-zone scores while going 29-for-38 themselves.

After exploding on the scene with 117 tackles and three interceptions, junior linebacker Jeremy Timpf will be the focal point of the defensive scheme for the next two seasons. The next step for him is becoming a vocal leader.

The most veteran and talented unit may be the specialists: kicker Daniel Grochowski, punter Alex Tardieu and long snapper Connor Farley. But Monken is going to need more than that to improve on last year's mark.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Jeremy Timpf, LB

The 6-1, 225-pound linebacker fulfilled the role of run-stopper and short-pass defender perfectly with his team-leading 117 tackles (14.5 for loss) and three interceptions (one returned for a touchdown). Unfortunately, no other Black Knight had as many as 70 total tackles and Army was outscored by more than a touchdown a game and outgained by more than 70 yards on average. Still, Timpf, a junior, will give the Army defense a foundation to build upon during the next two seasons.

BOTTOM LINE

Army is still a few years of strong recruiting from being a talent-rich program. For now, consistent fundamental football–limiting turnovers, competing at the line of scrimmage, and solid tackling–is the only way they'll avoid another eight-loss season.

–Michael Gentry

2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2014 RESULT
S.4	Fordham	42-31
S.12	@CONNECTICUT	35-21
S.19	Wake Forest	21-24
S.26	@EASTERN MICHIGAN	
O.3	@PENN STATE	
O.10	Duke	
O.17	Bucknell	
O.24	@RICE	21-41
N.7	@AIR FORCE	6-23
N.14	Tulane	
N.21	Rutgers	
D.12	Navy (at Philadelphia, PA)	10-17

COACH

Jeff Monken
Second year (4-8)
Career record: 42-24

Offensive coordinator: Brent Davis (second year)
Defensive coordinator: Jay Bateman (second year)

FAST FACTS

2014 RECORD: 4-8
Stadium: Michie Stadium (38,000)
Tickets: 877-TIX-ARMY
Site: West Point, N.Y.
Website: goarmysports.com
Twitter: @Army_Football

Daniel Grochowski

TIMPF: HANS PENNINK / AP; GROCHOWSKI: TONY GUTIERREZ / AP

Bullish on the Bison

North Dakota State is looking to make it five straight FCS titles—and who's crazy enough to pick against them?

BY WILL LONG | *Assistant Editor*

FCS PRESEASON TOP 25

1. North Dakota State
2. Sam Houston State
3. Illinois State
4. Villanova
5. Eastern Washington
6. Coastal Carolina
7. Jacksonville State
8. Chattanooga
9. Montana State
10. Youngstown State
11. Northern Iowa
12. James Madison
13. Idaho State
14. Eastern Kentucky
15. Montana
16. Liberty
17. Stephen F. Austin
18. New Hampshire
19. Indiana State
20. Alcorn State
21. Southeastern Louisiana
22. Northern Arizona
23. South Dakota State
24. Charleston Southern
25. Eastern Illinois

FCS ALL-AMERICA TEAM

OFFENSE

QB	John Robertson, Villanova, Sr.
RB	Marshaun Coprich, Illinois State, Sr.
RB	Chase Edmonds, Fordham, So.
OL	Joe Haeg, North Dakota State, Sr.
OL	Corey Levin, Chattanooga, Jr.
OL	Robert Booker, Missouri State, Sr.
OL	JP Flynn, Montana State, Jr.
OL	Donald Jackson III, Sam Houston State, Sr.
TE	Josh Cook, Idaho State, Jr.
WR	Cooper Kupp, Eastern Washington, Jr.
WR	Jake Wieneke, South Dakota State, So.

DEFENSE

DL	James Cowser, Southern Utah, Sr.
DL	Javon Hargrave, South Carolina State, Jr.
DL	P.J. Hall, Sam Houston State, So.
DL	Jonathan Woodard, Central Arkansas, Sr.
LB	Connor Underwood, Indiana State, Sr.
LB	Don Cherry, Villanova, Sr.
LB	Darnell Sankey, Sacramento State, Sr.
DB	Jermaine Hough, Jacksonville State, Sr.
DB	Donald Payne, Stetson, Jr.
DB	Harlan Miller, Southeastern Louisiana, Sr.
DB	Deiondre' Hall, Northern Iowa, Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	Michael Schmadeke, Northern Iowa, Sr.
P	Ben LeCompte, North Dakota State, Sr.
RET	Johnta' Hebert, Prairie View A&M, Sr.

Four in a row.

The North Dakota State Bison have won the FCS national championship every season since 2011.

Let's try and put that into a little perspective.

The 2014 Bison seniors ended their careers with more national titles (four) than losses (three). You read that correctly. North Dakota State has compiled a 58-3 record over the last four seasons, with losses coming to Youngstown State (2011), Indiana State (2012) and Northern Iowa (2014). Along the way, the Bison posted a perfect 4-0 record against the FBS, with wins over Minnesota (2011), Colorado State (2012), Kansas State (2013) and Iowa State (2014).

The Bison had no problems last season despite losing the all-time wins leader in FCS history (quarterback Brock Jensen) and former coach Craig Bohl (now at Wyoming), and coach Chris Klieman has NDSU set up for a run at an unprecedented fifth consecutive national title.

What makes the current run even more impressive is the sheer power and depth that the Missouri Valley Football Conference possesses. Six teams from the MVFC are in our preseason Top 25, and Illinois State is hungry for another shot at the Bison after falling in the FCS Championship Game by two points. Expect Youngstown State (with new coach Bo Pelini, the former head man at Nebraska), Northern Iowa, Indiana State and South Dakota State to challenge throughout the 2015 season.

Despite the transfer of quarterback Vernon Adams to Oregon, Eastern Washington is still the class of the Big Sky. Expect a lot of high-scoring affairs out west, as the Eagles will be joined by prolific offenses at Montana State, Idaho State and Montana.

The team best suited to challenge North Dakota State (outside of the MVFC) is Sam Houston State. And the Bearkats won't lack for motivation, as three of the last four seasons have ended with a loss to the Bison in the playoffs. The Southland remains one of the top three conferences, but Stephen F. Austin and Southeastern Louisiana will be in rebuilding mode this season.

Chris Klieman, North Dakota State

Villanova returns *Sporting News Yearbooks* preseason All-American John Robertson at quarterback after the dual threat won the 2014 Walter Payton Award. But the Wildcats must replace their leading rusher and receiver from last season. The door could be open for James Madison to challenge for the Colonial Athletic Association title with the return of quarterback Vad Lee, who had a very successful first season in Harrisonburg, Va., after his transfer from Georgia Tech.

The Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, winless in the FCS playoffs since 1999, has decided to drop its automatic berth into the NCAA postseason in favor of the Celebration Bowl, which will pit the champions of the MEAC and SWAC in a Dec. 19 game that will reportedly have a $1 million payout per team and be televised by ESPN.

Conference realignment has finally settled down, with only three moves for the 2015 season. Charlotte makes the jump up to the FBS level as the 49ers join Conference USA, while East Tennessee State and Kennesaw State begin playing this season. East Tennessee State–fielding a team for the first time since 2003–will play as an independent before joining the Southern Conference as a full-fledged member in 2016, while Kennesaw State joins the Big South this year.

KLIEMAN: TIM SHARP / AP; COWSER: G.M. ANDREWS / AP

QB's transfer to Oregon hurts, but EWU Eagles still the favorite

BY MIKE SORENSEN
Salt Lake City Deseret News

Over the past couple of decades the Big Sky has been perhaps the premier conference on the FCS level with three national championships, five runner-up finishes and numerous semifinal appearances.

However, last year, the Big Sky failed to advance a team to the FCS semifinals for the first time since 2007. Eastern Washington lost to eventual runner-up Illinois State in the quarterfinals, Montana was beaten in the second round and Montana State lost in the first round.

As always, the league will have several solid teams, but the question is whether any of them can challenge for a national title in 2015.

Eastern Washington (11-3, 7-1) would have been a logical choice to contend for a national championship this year behind dynamic quarterback Vernon Adams, the Walter Payton Award runner-up for two years running. However, Adams decided to forgo his senior season at EWU and play for Oregon, under the NCAA rule that allows graduate players to transfer to another school. Ironically, EWU opens the season at Oregon on Sept. 5.

Junior Jordan West is most likely to take over at QB after filling in for three games when Adams was out with an injury last year. In two-time All-American Cooper Kupp (104 catches, 1,431 yards), the Eagles have one of the top wide receivers in the nation. Junior linebacker Miquiyah Zamora leads a defense that needs improvement over last year.

Montana State (8-5, 6-2) may have the top offensive player in the league in quarterback Dakota Prukop, who finished fourth in both Big Sky passing (232.6 ypg) and rushing (87.8 ypg) last year and was first in passing efficiency. Running back Gunnar Brekke led the league in kick returns and was fourth on the team in both rushing and receiving. The Bobcats need to improve on defense after allowing 486 yards per game and ranking 114th in the nation in total defense.

After winning just six games the previous three seasons, **Idaho State** (8-4, 6-2) had a breakout campaign under fourth-year coach Mike Kramer. Quarterback Justin Arias, who led the FCS in passing yards, has graduated, but most of the offense returns, led by running back Xavier Finney, who led the Big Sky in rushing (1,495 yards) and wideout Madison Mangum, who caught 83 passes for 1,234 yards. Sophomore linebacker Mario Jenkins, who had the most tackles of any freshman in the FCS last year, leads the defense.

Defense may be the strength at **Montana** (9-5, 6-2), which welcomes a new coach in Bob Stitt, who's taking over for retired Mick Delaney. Stitt was known for his offense at NCAA Division 2 Colorado School of Mines, but the Grizzlies lost three-year starting QB Jordan Johnson and tried out four possible starters in spring ball. The defense also lost top players, but it has end Tyrone Holmes and linebacker Kendrick Van Ackeren to build around.

The strength at **Northern Arizona** (7-5, 5-3) is defense, particularly in stopping the pass, where the Lumberjacks were 17th in the nation in yards allowed thanks to veteran holdovers such as cornerback Marcus Alford and safety Eddie Horn. Returning starters on offense include quarterback Kyren Poe, running back Casey Jahn and wide receiver Dejzon Walker.

Cal Poly (7-5, 5-3) is coming off five straight seasons of finishing .500 or above and the Mustangs just missed the playoffs last year. They were the most efficient FCS team in 2014, losing just seven turnovers all season, and have senior quarterback Chris Brown back to lead a triple-option attack that led the nation in rushing the past two years.

Sacramento State (7-5, 4-4) finished last season strong under interim head coach Jody Sears, who now has the job full time. Running back Jordan Robinson (863 rushing yards) and receiver Nnamdi Agude (70 catches) return. Linebacker Darnell Sankey had 100 tackles in nine games last year before going down with a knee injury.

After making the FCS playoffs in 2013, **Southern Utah** (3-9, 3-5) struggled with a tough schedule last year. In senior defensive end James Cowser, the Thunderbirds have a legitimate candidate for FCS Defensive Player of the Year. Brigham Young transfer Ammon Olsen came on strong late last season, throwing for more than 3,000 yards, and could be one of the league's top quarterbacks.

It has been a tough couple of years for **Weber State** (2-10, 2-6), which made the FCS playoffs as recently as 2009. Jay Hill is in his second year and he's trying to rebuild the Wildcat program around players such as junior running back Zach Smith and sophomore linebacker Emmett Tela.

Under first-year coach Bubba Schweigert, defense kept **North Dakota** (5-7, 3-5) in a lot of games last year. However, UND had one of the worst offenses in the country (15.9 ppg and 254 ypg) and will need Joe Mollberg or Keaton Studsrud to step up at quarterback.

UC Davis (2-9, 1-7) must replace leading rusher Gabe Manzanares, but QB Ben Scott and wide receiver Ramon Vargas are back for what should be an improved team under third-year coach Ron Gould.

Northern Colorado (3-8, 2-6) returns quarterback Sean Rubalcaba, running back Darius Graham and receiver Ellis Onic, but will need help from the defense to improve on last year's losing record.

Portland State (3-9, 2-6) has had only one winning season since 2006 and will find it difficult again under interim coach Bruce Barnum. Cornerback Aaron Sibley and running back Steven Long are the Vikings' best players.

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Eastern Washington
2. Montana State
3. Idaho State
4. Montana
5. Northern Arizona
6. Cal Poly
7. Sacramento State
8. Southern Utah
9. Weber State
10. North Dakota
11. UC Davis
12. Northern Colorado
13. Portland State

TOP NFL PROSPECT

James Cowser
DE, Southern Utah

At 6-4 and 260 pounds, Cowser has the size and maturity, having served a two-year Mormon mission, but also the quickness as shown by his FCS-leading 28.5 tackles for loss and 11 sacks last year.

Chanticleers primed to avenge LU loss and regain league title

BY CHRIS LANG
Lynchburg (Va.) News & Advance

The last two Big South automatic playoff bids have been determined in alarmingly similar fashion: a walk-off blocked field goal.

Coastal Carolina escaped Liberty's Williams Stadium in 2013 thanks to a blocked kick in double overtime, and the Flames returned the favor last November at CCU when Chima Uzowihe denied Alex Catron's chip-shot field goal as time expired, securing a one-point win and Liberty's first FCS playoff berth.

Those two teams will be at the top of the conference heap again, but there are indications that the Big South is no longer a two-horse race. Charleston Southern, Presbyterian and Monmouth were all competitive with the league's top programs last season. Thanks to that newfound depth, the Big South is a conference on the rise.

TOP NFL PROSPECT

John Lunsford
K, Liberty

Could the best pro prospect be a kicker? Liberty senior John Lunsford can make a case. He kicked the three longest field goals in Division 1 last season, including a 60-yarder at the buzzer that sent LU's game with Richmond into overtime.

Coastal Carolina's (12-2, 4-1) 2014 season ended just as 2013 did, with a loss at perennial power North Dakota State in the FCS quarterfinals. But the Chanticleers took a huge step forward in coach Joe Moglia's third season, earning the program's first No. 1 ranking by ascending to the top of the FCS coaches' poll in November.

Quarterback Alex Ross, tailback De'Angelo Henderson and receivers John Israel, Tyrell Blanks and Bruce Mapp all return, but the Chanticleers must replace three starters on the offensive line and three-time Big South Defensive Player of the Year Quinn Backus. While Coastal figures some things out on the back end, all four starters return on the defensive line, providing stability up front.

The win at Coastal was a program-changer for **Liberty** (9-5, 4-1), which beat James Madison on the road in its first FCS playoff game before falling at Villanova in the second round. The Flames are stacked on offense thanks to the return of quarterback Josh Woodrum and receivers Darrin Peterson and Dante Shells. Desmond Rice rushed for nearly 1,000 yards in 2013 but missed last year with a knee injury. He'll team with D.J. Abnar, who ran for 1,289 yards last season, to form a talented backfield tandem.

Liberty's biggest concerns are on defense, where it must replace top safety Jacob Hagen and cornerback Kenny Scott. The Flames also face a difficult schedule that includes a stretch of four straight road games.

Charleston Southern (8-4, 3-2) followed its breakthrough 10-win 2013 season with an eight-win year that included a victory at Liberty. The Buccaneers return a ton of starters and get both Coastal and Liberty at home, and they could be a dark-horse threat to steal the conference title and earn their first playoff berth. Quarterback Austin Brown is back, as are four starters on the offensive line. Christian Reyes is gone at tailback, but Ben Robinson and Mike Holloway combined for nearly 1,100 yards rushing last season. Defensively, the biggest question mark is up front, where the Bucs must replace three linemen.

For the first time as a full-fledged Division 1 program, **Presbyterian** (6-5, 3-2) finished a season with a winning record, going 6-5 against a slate that included three FBS guarantee games. With all but two starters back on defense, the Blue Hose will look to continue their rise. Quarterback Heys McMath is back, but he'll need to find chemistry with a new group of receivers after the graduation of Jeremiah McKie and Tobi Antigha. McKie was also the league's top return threat.

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Coastal Carolina
2. Liberty
3. Charleston Southern
4. Presbyterian
5. Monmouth
6. Gardner-Webb
7. Kennesaw State

In its second year in the league, **Monmouth** (6-5, 1-4) is finally at the full FCS allotment of 63 scholarships. The Hawks cruised to a 5-1 start against a soft nonconference schedule but found the sledding tougher in league play, with their only win coming against last-place Gardner-Webb in the finale. Quarterback Brandon Hill and top receiver Neal Sterling are gone, but running back Lavon Chaney is back after filling in for injured starter Kwabena Asante last fall. Monmouth's strength is in its secondary, where safety Mike Basile will try to replicate a fantastic freshman season.

Gardner-Webb (4-8, 0-5) will have a new-look offense. Maybe that's not a bad thing. The Runnin' Bulldogs went winless in league play last season and scored just 50 points in five Big South games. Tyrell Maxwell is a true dual-threat quarterback who will get full-time reps after the graduation of Lucas Beatty. The Bulldogs also lose their top two tailbacks and receivers, including All-America wideout Kenny Cook. The defense should be strong, anchored by 6-2, 308-pound Samoan noseguard O.J. Mau. After missing last season with injuries, linebackers Chad Geter and Tanner Burch return.

Kennesaw State will dive into Big South play in its first year of football. Coach Brian Bohannon worked with Paul Johnson at Georgia Tech and will use a triple-option offense at KSU, which plays its first game against fellow startup East Tennessee State on Sept. 3. The Owls have just 11 juniors and four seniors on their roster. At quarterback, Citadel transfer Trey White accounted for 198 yards and two scores in KSU's spring game.

PHOTO BY JOEL COLEMAN / LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Colonial should come down to battle of star QBs

BY JOHN O'CONNOR
Richmond Times-Dispatch

The CAA may have the two best quarterbacks in the FCS. Villanova senior John Robertson won the 2014 Walter Payton Award, which goes to the division's top player, and James Madison senior Vad Lee was a finalist for the honor.

So the CAA pecking order starts with Villanova and Madison, with 10 teams trying to figure out a way to contain Robertson and Lee, each of them run/pass threats who will key what appear to be the league's most potent offenses.

Any outlook pertaining to the CAA's chances to qualify teams for the FCS playoffs and advance in postseason must include defending champion New Hampshire, which went 8-0 in conference play last season. Coach Sean McDonnell's Wildcats have made the NCAA playoff field 11 consecutive years, and they also return a quality quarterback, senior Sean Goldrich, another run-pass threat.

Villanova not only has one of the most decorated FCS offensive players in quarterback John Robertson, but one of the most highly regarded defensive players. Senior linebacker Don Cherry was named a first-team All-American after collecting 10 sacks and 21.5 tackles for loss last season.

Those two give coach Andy Talley twin foundations to build on after an 11-3 finish (7-1 CAA) and advancement to the FCS quarterfinals, where Villanova lost to Sam Houston State 34-31. Robertson was the CAA's fifth-leading rusher (1,078 yards) in addition to passing for 2,846 yards. He threw for 35 touchdowns and was intercepted three times.

Defensively, junior cornerback Jason Ceneus led the league in interceptions with five.

James Madison probably won't deal with the same early-season adjustment as last season, when Everett Withers succeeded Mickey Matthews as coach. The Dukes were 2-3 before winning seven straight games, then losing to Liberty in the first round of the playoffs and finishing 9-4 (6-2 CAA).

Vad Lee, a former starter at Georgia Tech, gradually gained a comfort level with the Dukes' system and developed into a strong leader, runner and passer. He averaged 64 rushing yards and led the CAA with 266.3 passing yards per game.

New Hampshire (12-2, 8-0 CAA) lost a big and impactful senior class, but that has happened before and coach Sean McDonnell's team has continued to win. Last year, the Wildcats lost their season opener at Toledo and then didn't fall again until they dropped a 21-18 decision to Illinois State in the FCS semifinals. New Hampshire will succeed again with an eclectic offense led by QB Sean Goldrich that spreads the field and a defense that excels in causing turnovers and sacks (CAA-leading 39 last season).

Richmond (9-5, 5-3) comes off a season in which it advanced to the NCAA playoffs for the first time since 2009. Despite the loss of 22 seniors, the Spiders seem set for a solid year with 6-2, 232-pound senior tailback Seth Fisher as the rugged face of coach Danny Rocco's physical team. Fisher gained 777 yards and scored 12 touchdowns and joins Jacobi Green and Jeremiah Hamlin as runners who will operate behind one of the league's largest offensive lines.

After several seasons of rotating quarterbacks because of injuries and ineffectiveness, **William & Mary** (7-5, 4-4) moves ahead with junior Steve Cluley, who may be ready to take the step from game manager to standout. That would allow the Tribe to diversify from a program that has been based primarily on defense the past few years. Returning tailback Mikal Abdul-Saboor led the league in rushing last season (1,266 yards, 12 touchdowns).

Defense will start as the strength, with linebacker Luke Rhodes (7.8 tackles per game), cornerback DeAndre Houston-Carson and safety Jared Velasquez leading a veteran group.

Maine (5-6, 4-4) is growing up. The Black Bears were young last season and started 2-5, but developed into a dangerous team by year's end. Maine looks for upgraded offense (16.4 ppg), behind sophomore quarterback Drew Belcher to help a defense that may be the league's best. Christophe Mulumba Tshimanga and Cabrinni Goncalves give coach Jack Cosgrove a top-notch set of linebackers.

Delaware (6-6, 4-4) looks to string together a successful series of Saturdays after inconsistency pulled down the Blue Hens last year. They might have the country's most interesting storyline in quarterback Jamie Jarmon.

Among the most celebrated high school athletes in Delaware's state history, the 6-1, 225-pound Jarmon was the second-round pick of the Texas Rangers (outfielder) in 2012. He played three years in the minor leagues and then enrolled at UD over the winter.

The defense will be disruptive with Blaine Woodson (8.5 sacks), the league's Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2014.

Towson went from losing to North Dakota State in the FCS Championship Game that closed the 2013 season to 4-8 (2-6).

Darius Victor, who rushed for 1,305 yards (5.2 yards per carry) and 12 touchdowns in 2014, leads the offense again.

Count on physical and aggressive play from **Stony Brook** (5-7, 4-4) as long as coach Chuck Priore is in charge. Epitomizing that approach is defensive lineman Victor Ochi, who had 11 sacks and 16.5 tackles for loss last season. Stony Brook was among the nation's top defensive teams (15.3 ppg), allowing only 21 TDs. Five starters are back from that unit.

Throwing the ball on **Albany** (7-5, 3-5) will be difficult with a quality secondary that features Kyle Sakowski, Rayshan Clark and Jamal Robinson. Coach Greg Gattuso brought in Penn State transfer D.J. Crook to play QB.

Elon (1-11, 0-8) needs CAA-quality linemen to gain some traction. The Phoenix finished last in rushing and next to last in rushing defense last year under coach Rich Skrosky.

Rhode Island (1-11, 1-7) had five quarterbacks in its latest recruiting class. That indicates where coach Jim Fleming believes the patching has to begin for a program that last qualified for the FCS playoffs in 1985. Fleming's team averaged 12.5 points per game in 2014.

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Villanova
2. James Madison
3. New Hampshire
4. Richmond
5. William & Mary
6. Maine
7. Delaware
8. Towson
9. Stony Brook
10. Albany
11. Elon
12. Rhode Island

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Reggie Diggs
WR, Richmond

The 6-4, 200-pound senior wideout tries to bully defensive backs. That sounds like a sensible approach given Diggs' size and strength advantages over most FCS cover men. Richmond coach Danny Rocco calls Diggs "a game-changer" because of his ability to catch the ball in traffic and reach for receptions.

DIGGS: SCOTT K. BROWN PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Harvard primed for Ivy League's first three-peat since 1986

BY MICHAEL GENTRY
Staff Writer

The back-to-back defending league champion Harvard Crimson could become the first Ivy League team to win three straight conference titles since the 1986 Pennsylvania Quakers.

But No. 3 won't come easy if last season is any indication. Yale lit up the Ivy League with its offensive power in 2014 en route to becoming the No. 1 FCS team in yards per game. As coach Anthony Reno puts it, the Bulldogs were two possessions away from being undefeated league champions, losing to Harvard and Dartmouth by 14 total points.

For its part, Dartmouth had its best season since 1997, taking its only conference loss from Harvard, while Princeton's fourth-place finish was marred only by losses to the three teams ahead of it in the standings.

Harvard (10-0, 7-0 Ivy) is still the best bet to win this year after excelling through adversity in 2014. Former starting quarterback Conner Hempel was limited to only four starts last season due to injuries. The Crimson went 6-0 with backup Scott Hosch, who threw for 213 yards per game, and had the conference's second-best offense.

Hosch will have to improve his touchdown/interception ratio (7/6) and make plays with his feet, according to coach Tim Murphy, but the passing lanes should be open thanks to All-Ivy back Paul Stanton (110 rushing yards per game), who had five touchdown runs of 30 yards or more, including 42-yard and 75-yard scores in a 34-24 win over Penn. Leading receiver Andrew Fischer (67.7 receiving yards per game) returns along with the Crimson's four other top pass catchers.

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Morgan Roberts
QB, Yale

The 6-3, 210-pound senior from Charlotte began his college career at Clemson before transferring to Yale in 2013. In his first year as a starter last season, he led one of the most explosive offenses in the nation with 3,239 passing yards and 22 touchdowns. Major college football experience coupled with a strong, accurate arm could land him at the next level, especially if Yale has similar offensive success this year.

All-Ivy defenders Norman Hayes and Zack Hodges have moved on, but stellar players remain in linebackers Jacob Lindsey, Eric Medes and Matt Koran, the team's top three tacklers in 2014.

Winning a third straight title would be a benchmark for Murphy, who has eight Ivy League crowns in his tenure at Harvard. It would also be No. 17 for the Crimson, giving them the most in the Ivy's storied history.

Archrival **Yale's** (8-2, 5-2) personnel losses seem crippling: running back and Ivy Player of the Year Tyler Varga; Grant Wallace, the FCS's leading receiver with 113.9 receiving yards per game; and all-time-leading Bulldog pass catcher Deon Randall. But quarterback Morgan Roberts (second in FCS with 323 passing yards per game) is back and Reno says Roberts can keep the offense afloat with his sound decision-making.

In the backfield, junior Candler Rich (7.5 yards per carry in 2014) and sophomore Deshawn Salter are primed for breakout seasons in the rushing game. The marquee name in the receiving corps is Bo Hines, a sophomore transfer who led N.C. State in receiving (45 catches for 616 yards) last year as a true freshman in the ACC.

The Bulldogs' defense returns 11 players who played every game in 2014. That includes 10 of the top 11 tacklers, and every player who snagged Yale's 10 total interceptions. Reno says his players are still bitter and the team has had its best offseason since he arrived in 2012.

A **Dartmouth** (8-2, 6-1) championship in 2015 wouldn't be shocking with the Big Green returning nearly every prominent player. Senior quarterback and All-Ivy first-teamer Dalyn Williams (2,119 passing yards, 21 touchdowns) has multiple weapons, including senior running back Kyle Bramble (31 receptions), and that duo will be hard to contain on the ground, as they combined for 1,099 rushing yards and 11 TDs last season.

Tackle A.J. Zuttah (48 tackles), linebacker Will McNamara (87) and cornerback Vernon Harris (8 pass breakups), all seniors, lead a veteran defense that will challenge Harvard as the best in the league.

Brown (5-5, 3-4) averaged just 24.7 points per game in 2014, but the Bears managed to hold opponents to 22.8 an outing. The defense won't be able to cover up scoring deficiencies this year after graduating several top producers, including linebacker Xavier Russo (80 tackles) and defensive back Patrick O'Neill (8 pass breakups). However, the offense could be more explosive with quarterback Marcus Fuller (2,618 passing yards) and leading pass catcher Brian Strachan (56 receptions) returning for their fifth years. Senior Andrew Coke is a versatile running back (516 rushing yards, 23 receptions) who could score double-digit touchdowns this year after getting five on the ground in 2014.

Princeton's (5-5, 3-4) fourth-ranked offense will struggle this year with the most seasoned skill-position starter returning being senior running back DiAndre Atwater (486 rushing yards). The defense, though, will be formidable with 10 starters back, including five who had more than 40 tackles last year, and two—defensive back Dorian Williams and linebacker Rohan Hylton—with more than 70. But overcoming offensive shortcomings will be a major task for the Tigers.

Pennsylvania (2-8, 2-5) is tied with Harvard and Dartmouth with 16 Ivy League titles, but a 17th in 2015 is pretty unlikely. The Quakers will have a rough go of it with key departures on every unit. The only intact group for new head coach Ray Priore is the defensive line with Tyler Drake, Jack Madden and Corey Power (14 combined tackles for loss). Quarterback Alek Torgersen should be effective after passing for 2,689 yards last season, but he'll be working without his top two receivers from 2014.

Cornell (1-9, 1-6) and **Columbia** (0-10, 0-7) will bring up the rear again in the Ivy. The Big Red's sole win last year came against its lowly counterpart, and that by just three points, 30-27. The Lions will put up a fight, though, with new head coach and former longtime Penn boss Al Bagnoli. But neither squad will muster up the talent to compete with the upper half of the Ivy in 2015.

THE IVY LEAGUE

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Harvard
2. Yale
3. Dartmouth
4. Brown
5. Princeton
6. Pennsylvania
7. Cornell
8. Columbia

ROBERTS: STEPHAN SAVOIA / AP

MEAC shifts directions with Celebration Bowl

BY LUT WILLIAMS
Black College Sports Page

The MEAC made a major shift in direction when it gave up its automatic berth to the FCS playoffs and its seat on the 11-member FCS Selection Committee to partner with ESPN on a six-year deal for its champion to play in the new postseason Celebration Bowl (Dec. 19) in Atlanta against the SWAC champion.

Expect greater competition for the bowl berth as four new coaches with solid credentials—former James Madison head man Alex Wood (Florida A&M), former Richmond head coach Latrell Scott (Norfolk State) and veteran assistants Terry Sims (Bethune-Cookman) and Kenny Carter (Delaware State)—join a league that had an unprecedented five co-champions in 2014.

Defense is the element that separates **South Carolina State** (8-4, 6-2 MEAC last year) from the rest of the contenders. Defensive lineman Javon Hargrave, who was among the best in the FCS with 16 sacks (1.33 per game), and MEAC Rookie of the Year Darius Leonard, a linebacker with 87 tackles and five sacks last season, are the ringleaders of a celebrated group that includes All-MEAC corner and kick returner Antonio Hamilton.

Veteran Adrian Kollock returns at quarterback with Jalen "Scoot" Simmons the kingpin of a deep set of running backs.

Speed is the calling card for **North Carolina A&T** (9-3, 6-2) and diminutive (5-6, 172 pounds) running back Tarik Cohen and a host of others have it in spades. Cohen has two 1,000-yard seasons in the books but had a late fumble in a season-ending loss to rival N.C. Central that cost the Aggies the outright league title. Minnesota transfer Donovahn Jones joins Denzel Keyes (24 receptions, 6 TDs) as the top receiving targets. The offensive line lost three starters.

The speed extends to the defense and in the return game, where Tony McRae excels. Nose tackle Marquis Ragland, linebacker Denzel Jones and strong safety Landis Shoffner are dependable veterans.

North Carolina Central (7-5, 6-2) players bought in to coach Jerry Mack's schemes and philosophies quick enough to grab a share of the school's first-ever MEAC football championship in his first season.

The Eagles are again title contenders after adding a talented recruiting class to a squad that features eight returning All-MEAC picks, including quarterback Malcolm Bell, receivers Adrian Wilkins and Quentin Atkinson, offensive lineman Clevonne Davis, defensive back C.J. Moore and defensive back/return specialist Michael Jones.

Terry Sims takes the reins at **Bethune-Cookman** (9-3, 6-2) after helping former head coach Brian Jenkins win four titles in five years as his top assistant. Quarterbacks Quentin Williams and Larry Brihm and running backs Anthony Jordan and Mike Jones are skill-position vets who should ease the transition.

The Wildcats lost nine of their top 10 tacklers on defense but Sims says able replacements are in the wings. Senior lineman Junior Estelus and senior safety Marquis Drayton are mainstays.

Last season, quarterback Moses Skillon and 1,000-yard running back Herb Walker Jr. got **Morgan State** (7-6, 6-2) and new coach Lee Hull a share of its first MEAC title in 20 years and first-ever FCS playoff berth. Lamont Brown III, the team's leading rusher in 2013, is back after missing nearly all of last season to give the Bears two legit threats in the backfield. Veteran QB Seth Higgins also returns.

The Bears must find playmakers on defense after losing three all-conference standouts in linebacker Cody Acker, end Chris Robinson and Paul Eatman in the secondary.

Defensive breakdowns and inconsistent quarterback play plagued **Hampton** (3-9, 2-6) in coach Connell Maynor's first year directing the Pirates. David Watford, who started 13 games at quarterback for the University of Virginia in 2013, is immediately eligible as a graduate transfer. He'll try to unseat effective late-season starter Jerrell Antoine. MEAC receptions and yardage leader Twarm Mixon heads a deep receiving corps, while Eric Carter will step in for departed 1,000-yard rusher Jorrian Washington as the feature back.

Linebacker Joshua Thorne (113 tackles) and end Miles Grooms are the senior defensive leaders. Maynor shuffled his coaching staff in the offseason and brought in 12 newcomers to address deficiencies in the defensive unit.

Fresh off leading Virginia State to a CIAA title and NCAA Division 2 playoff berth, Latrell Scott takes over at **Norfolk State** (4-8, 4-4) with much of his former staff in tow. Sophomore quarterback Terrence Ervin and an offense that averaged less than 12 points per game should benefit from Scott's extensive offensive background.

The Spartans' defense, a high-performing group under former head coach Pete Adrian, lost some key pieces but remains strong thanks to the return of senior linebackers Deon King and Lamar Neal.

The biggest task facing **Howard** (5-7, 3-5) will be finding a replacement for QB Greg McGhee—the four-year starter finished his time with the Bison as the MEAC's career total offense leader—and shoring up a defense that surrendered 418 yards per game.

A 25-year coaching career that includes stints with Joe Paterno, Urban Meyer and Charlie Strong will come in handy for longtime assistant Kenny Carter as he tries to revive the **Delaware State** (2-10, 2-6) program. Ditto for 35-year coaching veteran Alex Wood at **Florida A&M** (3-9, 3-6).

Fundamentals like running the ball and stopping the run were at the heart of Delaware State's troubles last season. Carter will build the defense around back Terrick Colston and linebacker Elbie Williams and seek better form from running backs Jamal Jackson and Dae-Hon Cheung.

Senior linebacker Akil Blount is the lone all-conference returnee at FAMU. Wood believes the O-line is one of the strong suits for the Rattlers.

Savannah State (0-12, 0-8) was beat up early and late in a winless 2014 campaign. Coach Ernest Wilson III enters his third season trying to get the Tigers untracked while facing yearlong practice restrictions due to NCAA violations.

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. South Carolina State
2. North Carolina A&T
3. North Carolina Central
4. Bethune-Cookman
5. Morgan State
6. Hampton
7. Norfolk State
8. Howard
9. Delaware State
10. Florida A&M
11. Savannah State

HARGRAVE: SC STATE ATHLETIC MEDIA RELATIONS

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Javon Hargrave
DT, South Carolina State

NFLDraftScout.com rates the 6-2, 311-pound senior as the 20th-best defensive tackle prospect in the 2016 draft. An FCS record-tying six sacks against nationally ranked Bethune-Cookman earned him FCS National Player of the Week and put him on the map. North Carolina A&T coach Rod Broadway calls him "a man among boys." Strength and quickness are his biggest assets.

MISSOURI VALLEY

MVC-SPORTS.COM

MVFC gave itself a hard act to follow last season

BY RANDY REINHARDT
Bloomington (Ill.) Pantagraph

The Missouri Valley Football Conference simply couldn't lose when perennial league flag-wavers North Dakota State and Illinois State met for the FCS national championship back in January.

And even before the Bison edged the Redbirds in a classic title game, the Valley didn't lose much either. The MVFC posted an eye-popping 30-2 record against nonconference FCS opponents. The league's five playoff teams earned an FCS playoff-record 10 victories.

Even amid all those elite programs, **North Dakota State** (15-1, 7-1 MVFC) stands tall. The Bison claimed an unprecedented fourth straight national crown and do not appear destined for a downturn.

Senior quarterback Carson Wentz headlines a group of eight returning offensive starters. Last season, Wentz became the first 3,000-yard passer in school history and rushed for 642. He will be throwing to Zach Vraa and emerging sophomore RJ Urzendowski.

Tailbacks King Frazier and Chase Morlock are capable of stepping in for 1,994-yard rusher John Crockett. On the offensive line, former all-conference left guard Zack Johnson is back after sitting out 2014 with a knee injury to join standout tackle Joe Haeg.

Defensively, NDSU needs fresh faces at end and outside linebacker. Tackles Nate Tanguay and Brian Schaetz and cornerbacks CJ Smith and Jordan Champion are savvy defenders, while junior middle linebacker Nick DeLuca gained valuable late-season experience a year ago.

Illinois State (13-2, 7-1) welcomes back possibly the top quarterback-tailback tandem in FCS. Quarterback Tre Roberson was named MVFC Newcomer of the Year after passing for 3,221 yards and rushing for 1,029 last year, while runner Marshaun Coprich put together an All-America season, rushing for 2,274 yards and 27 touchdowns.

Guard Kyle Avaloy and center Mark Spelman return, but the Redbirds need three new starting offensive linemen and are looking for youngsters to claim spots at wide receiver and tight end.

The ISU defense has two first-team all-conference performers returning in end Teddy Corwin and linebacker Pat Meehan. A key addition is University of Iowa transfer Reggie Spearman at outside linebacker.

Youngstown State (7-5, 4-4) brought in former Nebraska head coach and Youngstown native Bo Pelini as its new mentor. After a 67-27 record with the Cornhuskers, Pelini figures to continue winning in northeast Ohio.

He'll be greeted by several returning Penguin playmakers led by quarterback Hunter Wells, tailback Martin Ruiz and receiver Andrew Williams. Justin Spencer, Trevor Strickland, Brock Eisenhuth and Dylan Colucci are back to provide the muscle up front, so the YSU offense should be formidable.

The Youngstown defensive line is stout with Nebraska transfer end Avery Moss joining Derek Rivers, Emmanuel Kromah and Terrell Williams.

Northern Iowa (9-5, 6-2) was the only team to defeat North Dakota State and Illinois State in regular-season play last year, and the Panthers return a superior defense spearheaded by linebacker Brett McMakin, end Isaac Ales and backs Deiondre' Hall and Tim Kilfoy.

Do-everything tailback David Johnson's next appearance will be at the NFL Draft, so Rutgers transfer Savon Huggins could step right in at tailback. Aaron Bailey, a transfer from the University of Illinois, appeared headed to UNI at press time to battle Sawyer Kollmorgen for the quarterback job.

Indiana State (8-6, 4-4) rebounded from a 1-11 freefall in 2013 to 8-6 with a playoff triumph a year ago. Linebacker Connor Underwood is an All-American, while linebacker Kendall Walker, cornerbacks Travis Starks and Alex Stowers and safeties Mark Sewall and Tsali Lough will help bolster a sound defense. Former Cal player Zach Kline will challenge Matt Adam, last season's backup, for the Sycamores' starting QB job.

South Dakota State (9-5, 5-3) has some of the top players in school history to replace as it seeks a fifth straight NCAA playoff berth. Gone are school record-holders in All-America tailback Zach Zenner, quarterback Austin Sumner and receiver Jason Schneider. Zach Lujan is the most experienced quarterback option, while a group of running backs are in line to divvy-up Zenner's workload. Receiver Jake Wieneke was last season's MVFC Freshman of the Year. Lineman Cole Langer and linebacker T.J. Lally are top-notch defenders.

Western Illinois (5-7, 3-5) is expecting big things from an offense that boasts quarterback Trenton Norvell, all-league receiver Lance Lenoir, running back Devon Moore and six seasoned linemen. Better defense could vault the Leathernecks into the league's upper half. However, Western was last in Valley pass defense a year ago and linebackers Kevin Kintzel and Luke Venegoni have departed.

Southern Illinois (6-6, 3-5) quarterback Mark Iannotti passed for 2,241 yards and 22 touchdowns a year ago, but the 6-2, 227-pound senior no longer has weapons like tight end MyCole Pruitt and tailback Malcolm Agnew at his disposal. Sophomore running back Cameron Walter could emerge as the primary ballcarrier. Coach Dale Lennon has surrendered his duties as defensive coordinator to David Elson, a former Valley head coach at Western Kentucky.

Missouri State (4-8, 1-7) brought in Missouri defensive coordinator Dave Steckel as head coach after the Bears won just one conference contest last year. Steckel will build around center Robert Booker and tailback Calan Crowder on offense. The defense welcomes back three line starters in Brad Pryor, Cecil Bratton and James Barnes and linebackers Dylan Cole and Christian Hoffmann.

South Dakota (2-10, 0-8) has plenty of experience returning in the form of 20 starters from 2014. But the Coyotes, who were winless in league play and are 3-19 in three years of MVFC contests, must prove they are capable of getting victories in the rugged Valley. Quarterback Kevin Earl and tailback Trevor Bouma fell victim to an injury epidemic on the Coyotes' offense last season, but they are back and will be counted on heavily.

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Carson Wentz
QB, North Dakota State

At 6-6 and 231 pounds, Wentz has the dimensions to attract NFL attention. The senior from Bismarck, N.D., has the skills to match, too, with a great arm and the ability to scramble. And he wins. In his first season as starter, Wentz ran for the go-ahead touchdown in the final minute of the FCS National Championship Game.

WENTZ: CHARLIE NEIBERGALL / AP

THE VALLEY

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. North Dakota State
2. Illinois State
3. Youngstown State
4. Northern Iowa
5. Indiana State
6. South Dakota State
7. Western Illinois
8. Southern Illinois
9. Missouri State
10. South Dakota

Red (news) Flash: SFU's time is now

BY STEVE AMEDIO
Troy (N.Y.) Record

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1 Saint Francis (Pa.)
2 Bryant
3 Sacred Heart
4 Wagner
5 Duquesne
6 Central Connecticut State
7 Robert Morris

The NEC's best teams have the league's best quarterbacks. Four signal-callers passed for at least 1,455 yards in 2014. Three of them return, and they should figure prominently in deciding who wins this season's title.

The group includes St. Francis' Zack Drayer, the least prolific of the four (112-of-195, 1,455 yards and 15 touchdowns in 2014) but the one who has the best surrounding cast.

The Red Flash exceeded expectations a year ago by having the league's best running game. Senior ballcarrier Khairi Dickson was the NEC's Offensive Player of the Year, while backfield mate Marcus Bagley was the conference's Rookie of the Year.

A year ago, Sacred Heart and Wagner shared the league's best record, but Saint Francis appears armed to make that distinction its own in 2015.

The rise up the NEC ladder for **Saint Francis** (5-6, 3-3 NEC in 2014) has been a slow one. After a 3-28 overall record from 2008 through 2011, the Red Flash have produced three straight .500 finishes in conference play. If a breakthrough year is to occur, this is appears to be it.

Saint Francis had the best overall offense in the NEC last season, the best pass-run balance, and all the key skill-position players are back.

Rushing yards will be provided by 2014 NEC Offensive Player of the Year Khairi Dickson, whose 155.3-yard average per game was tops nationally at the FCS level. When he gets tired, the Red Flash can turn to last season's NEC Offensive Rookie of the Year, Marcus Bagley, who rushed for 427 yards as a freshman (5.6 per carry).

The aerial attack will be led again by 6-3 junior quarterback Zack Drayer and his top target, senior scatback Anthony Abeid, who had 28 catches for 497 yards in 2014.

The Red Flash need to shore up both lines, but six starters are back on defense.

Bryant (8-3, 4-2) appears best equipped to challenge SFU, as the Bulldogs return nine offensive starters that include standout junior quarterback Dalton Easton (2,007 passing yards, 20 TDs last season). His top target is senior wide receiver Chad Ward (46 catches, 647 yards), while running back Ricardo McCray is an all-purpose threat who scored 14 touchdowns last year and had 17 plays of 20 or more yards.

Defensively, linebackers Marquise Watson and Patrick Kenney are solid, but Bryant has only three starters back on that side of the ball.

The return of last season's best NEC passer, RJ Noel (202-for-386, 2,477 yards, 23 TDs), and his top receiving target, wideout Moses Webb (37 catches, 577 yards), should ensure that the league's FCS playoff representative from a year ago, **Sacred Heart** (9-3, 5-1), won't fall far from the top.

The Pioneers also have two of the top linebackers in the league returning in first-team All-NEC choice James Rentz and second-teamer Kevin Barry. Sacred Heart graduated seven starters on both sides of the ball, however, and doesn't figure to be quite as dominant as a year ago when it led the league in 12 defensive categories.

Wagner (7-4, 5-1) lost longtime coach Walt Hameline (223 wins in 34 years) to retirement, but former offensive coordinator Jason Houghtaling's promotion ensures continuity. The first order of business for Houghtaling will be settling on a starting quarterback between seniors Chris Andrews (657 passing yards last season) and Brian Gehring, who suffered a broken hand last midseason that enabled Andrews to step up. Whoever wins the job, his top target is likely to be fifth-year senior Anthony Carrington (63 career receptions), who missed all of 2014 with a knee injury.

DICKSON: GREGORY PAYAN / AP

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Khairi Dickson
RB, St. Francis

Although senior Dickson is on the small side at 6-0 and185 pounds, he knows how to use his speed and elusiveness to confound defenders. The Cleveland product led all FCS runners nationally in rushing yards per game with 155.3 per contest in 2014.

Defensive tackle Fidel Okoye, an All-NEC pick in 2013, also returns after missing last year with a knee injury. He'll help anchor a defense that includes last year's All-NEC noseguard, 6-2, 280-pound Al Page, and linebackers Greg Hilliard and Najee Harris.

Duquesne (6-6, 2-4) could also be in the mix with an offense led by junior quarterback Dillon Buechel (2,015 passing yards, 14 TDs) and 6-1, 196-pound wide receiver Chris King (68 catches, 1,127 yards). Four starters on the offensive line return, but the Dukes need to shore up what was a weak ground attack in 2014.

Defensively, eight starters are back, led by two stellar linebackers: NEC Defensive Rookie of the Year Nathan Stone and second-team All-NEC selection Sam Martello.

Central Connecticut State (3-9, 1-5) will be better this year if it can find a sufficient replacement for quarterback Nick SanGiacomo, who chose not to return for his senior campaign after throwing for 2,108 yards last season. Sophomore Tavion Pauldo (7-of-8 passing for 64 yards) will get first shot at replacing SanGiacomo. Running back Brenden Lytton, who rushed for 450 yards in 2014, is the top offensive threat returning.

The Blue Devils' strength should be on the defensive side, where eight starters return.

If **Robert Morris** (1-10, 1-5) is to go .500 for the first time since 2010, it needs young players to mature quickly. Case in point: seven of its 11 defensive starters in 2014's final contest were freshmen or sophomores. The return of defensive back Marcelis Branch, who sat out last season but was the NEC's Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2012, will help.

Offensively, junior Luke Brumbaugh (83-of-166 passing for 672 yards in 2014) received the most time of four quarterbacks last season. The Colonials also have a capable rusher in sophomore back Rameses Owens, who went over 150 yards in two games before a midseason injury sidelined him. The offense, however, needs to significantly reduce its minus-20 turnover margin from 2014.

With 10 All-OVC picks back, JSU Gamecocks should rule the roost

BY MICHAEL GRANT
Louisville Courier-Journal

It looks like it should be a three-team race for the Ohio Valley Conference this season among Jacksonville State, Eastern Kentucky and Eastern Illinois. All three could reach the FCS playoffs. Last season, JSU and EKU both lost their playoff openers at home.

Jacksonville State, which has several key starters returning, goes into the season as a favorite. The Gamecocks will try to string together back-to-back 8-0 OVC seasons. The last school to go 8-0 in consecutive years of league play was Murray State in 1995-96. Watch out for Eastern Kentucky, however, as the Colonels could make a surge to the top with some high-impact FBS transfers.

Jacksonville State (10-2, 8-0 OVC last season) returns 10 All-OVC selections. The offense was fourth in the FCS with 510.8 yards of total offense per game, a school record. It will need to replace top running back DaMarcus James (1,151 yards, 14 TDs), but returning seniors Troymaine Pope (715 yards, 6 TDs) and Miles Jones (630, 7) are good rushing options. The Gamecocks also have All-OVC quarterback Eli Jenkins, who passed for 1,870 yards and rushed for 698 more in 2014.

Defensive tackle Devaunte Sigler, the reigning OVC Defensive Player of the Year, is back. The Auburn transfer had 31 tackles (8.0 for loss), 3.5 sacks and an interception last year. The Gamecocks will add UAB transfer Joseph Roberts at defensive end.

For **Eastern Kentucky** (9-4, 6-2), it all starts with senior running back Dy'Shawn Mobley. The former University of Kentucky player and 2014 OVC Offensive Player of the Year was 12th in the FCS in rushing yards (1,491) and tied for seventh in rushing TDs (20). Mobley tied a conference single-game mark with six total TDs and five rushing scores in a victory over Murray State.

Mobley will be helped by an offensive line that features first-team All-OVC tackle Brett Eyckmans and second-team All-OVC guard Trey Shelton.

The biggest question will be at quarterback. University of Cincinnati transfer Bennie Coney played in 11 games last year at EKU but completed just 53.8 percent of his passes.

Defensively, EKU returns eight starters and will add two FBS transfers: end Noah Spence (ex-Ohio State) and linebacker D'vonta Derricott (Kansas State). Spence was a 2013 first-team All-Big Ten selection but missed all of last season after reportedly failing a second drug test.

Eastern Illinois (5-7, 5-3) has seven starters returning on both offense and defense. Former University of Kentucky quarterback Jalen Whitlow was a second-team All-OVC pick in 2014. The dual threat rushed for 792 yards and 12 TDs and passed for 2,075 yards and 15 scores. He'll get some competition at QB this season from Syracuse transfer Mitch Kimball.

Eastern should be especially strong in the rushing game, where Shepard Little finished eighth nationally in yards per carry (6.43) and gained 797 yards last year. The Panthers also added two impact FBS transfers at running back in Korliss Marshall (ex-Arkansas) and Devin Church (Illinois).

Jason Simpson is the winningest active coach in the OVC and **UT Martin** (6-6, 5-3) has been fairly consistent since his first season in 2006.

The defense has seven returning starters led by linebacker Nick Dance and cornerback Jordan Landry. Dance had 56 tackles, five tackles for a loss and a pair of forced fumbles last season. The Skyhawks will also add former UAB defensive lineman Parrish Huddleston as a transfer.

Tennessee State (6-6, 3-5) could be in rebuilding mode with just eight starters back—four on offense, two on defense.

The Tigers do have three incoming FBS transfers. Offensive tackle Duaron Williams (ex-Iowa State) is a former three-star recruit and was ranked among the top 30 prep guards in the country. Cornerback David Kamara (Ole Miss) was also a three-star recruit. Tight end Rodney Morris (UAB) redshirted last year for the Blazers.

Looking for an OVC team that could make a jump? **Tennessee Tech** (5-7, 4-4) has 17 starters returning for a team that beat FCS playoff-bound Indiana State. The defense will be led by middle linebacker Tra'Darius Goff, who returns for his senior campaign after taking a medical redshirt last year. He was a 2014 preseason All-OVC selection.

At **Southeast Missouri** (5-7, 3-5), having All-OVC wide receiver Paul McRoberts healthy for the entire season will help. He caught 44 passes for 711 yards and nine touchdowns in seven games last year. McRoberts had six TD catches in the first four games but missed five contests due to injury. Junior Kicker Ryan McCrum earned All-OVC honors. He was the only player in the FCS with four field goals of 50 yards or longer in 2014.

Mitch Stewart was promoted from offensive coordinator after Chris Hatcher left to take over the head-coaching job at Samford, so there's new blood at the top of the **Murray State** (3-9, 1-7) program. Stewart's top player will be All-America kick returner Pokey Harris, who returned three kicks for touchdowns to lead the nation last season and rushed for 627 yards from his tailback position (5.9 per carry).

Junior quarterback KD Humphries is one of nine returning starters. He led the league in passing yards (3,483), TD passes (27) and completion percentage (67.4). The Racers also added troubled FBS transfer Zeke Pike, a 6-6, 250-pound senior who played quarterback at Auburn and tight end at Louisville before being dismissed from both programs.

Austin Peay (1-11, 1-7) returns eight starters for an offense that scored an FCS-low 9.7 points per game and was sixth worst in total offense (249.8 yards per game). The Governors brought in 13 new offensive linemen to help improve their attack.

The defense was also porous last year, allowing 43.6 points per game (fourth most in the nation), but junior linebacker Antonio Turner showed promise with 81 tackles, including seven for loss.

TOP NFL PROSPECT

LaMichael Fanning
DE, Jacksonville State

Fanning was a member of Alabama's top-ranked 2011 recruiting class. He later transferred to the Gamecocks and had four sacks against constant double teams last year and was a first-team All-OVC selection.

FANNING: BUTCH DILL / AP

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Jacksonville State
2. Eastern Kentucky
3. Eastern Illinois
4. UT Martin
5. Tennessee State
6. Tennessee Tech
7. Southeast Missouri
8. Murray State
9. Austin Peay

Scatback Edmonds enough to separate Rams from rest of the Patriot pack

BY PATRICK STEVENS
Syracuse (N.Y.) Post-Standard

The reigning conference champion saw its roster wiped out by graduation. Last year's runner-up finds itself down most of its all-conference players. And no one else in the seven-team league registered a winning record, either overall or in conference play.

Such is life in the Patriot League, which might not have as explosive a team as Fordham was a year ago but is a decent bet to have an increase in parity in 2015.

Still, for all **Fordham** lost—and it saw 18 starters exit from last year's 11-3 playoff team—it still has amassed its share of talent in recent years. Sophomore tailback Chase Edmonds gives coach Joe Moorhead an established piece to build around on offense, something to be valued after the graduation of quarterback Mike Nebrich.

The Rams don't have a quarterback on the roster who has thrown a pass in a college game, a significant concern. They are also down their four leading receivers, with 6-8 tight end Phazahn Odom an intriguing candidate for a larger role.

There might be greater issues on the other side of the ball, where linebacker George Dawson is the defense's lone returning starter. If Fordham is to repeat as Patriot champions, it will have to happen with a dramatically different cast.

While the Rams fielded the Patriot's best offense a season ago, it was **Bucknell** that boasted the stingiest defense while finishing 8-3. While some of the stars of that bunch depart, including conference Defensive Player of the Year Evan Byers, there remains strength in the secondary. The Bison lose only 10 of their 55 starts in the secondary, and safety Clayton Ewell (4.5 sacks, 4 interceptions) figures to be an all-conference anchor.

Offensively, quarterback R.J. Nitti returns after missing some time with injury last season, while tailback C.J. Williams rushed for 901 yards in only eight games.

For a team that loves a power running game like **Colgate**, the presence of an ample supply of starter-quality offensive linemen is an encouraging sign. That is the case for the Raiders (5-7 last season) as they look to build on rumbling for 181 rushing yards per game last season, the most in the Patriot League. Look for Colgate to lean heavily on the run as junior quarterback Jake Melville continues to mature.

The Raiders were also adept at stopping the ground game last season, but the graduation of linebacker Kris Kent (12 tackles for loss) is a substantial one. Linebacker Kyle Diener, who led Colgate with 89 tackles last season, does return, and there is optimism Pat Afriyie (who had three sacks in the Raiders' season-ending defeat of Bucknell) can enjoy a breakout season as a sophomore.

Lafayette closed out last season with back-to-back victories, finishing 5-6, but faces the task of replacing graduated tailback Ross Scheuerman (1,191 yards, 12 TDs). The Leopards might need to rely more on junior quarterbacks Drew Reed and Blake Searfoss, who split time last year and combined for 15 touchdown passes and 13 interceptions.

Defensively, safety Matt Smalley will again be a pivotal figure for Lafayette. Twice a first-team All-Patriot selection, Smalley broke up 11 passes and picked off another in 2014.

Last year was a step back for **Lehigh**, which won 39 games between 2010 and 2013 before producing a 3-8 mark in 2014. But there's enough returning on offense to suggest the Mountain Hawks can bounce back to some degree.

Junior Nick Shafnisky leads all Patriot League returnees in passing yards (2,370) and passing touchdowns (14), and sophomore wideout Troy Pelletier should be one of the conference's top targets. There is less certainty on defense, where Lehigh ranked last in the Patriot in points, rushing yards and passing yards a season ago. The difference between modest improvement and a big step forward rests on that side of the ball.

Holy Cross is a credible candidate to approach or even surpass .500 overall after suffering six of its eight defeats (4-8 overall) by a touchdown or less last season. Peter Pujals threw for 2,353 yards and 10 TDs and rushed for 705 yards and six scores last season, and should again be among the league's most productive quarterbacks.

The Crusaders will need some improvement on defense, where eight starters return from a unit that ranked ahead of only Lehigh in both points and yards allowed. Linebacker John Zakrzewski (team-high 103 tackles) should contend for all-conference honors.

Georgetown continues to try to gain traction despite not offering scholarships, and there is talent in place for the Hoyas to improve on last season's 3-8 mark in coach Rob Sgarlata's first season. Running back Jo'el Kimpela averaged 5.3 yards per carry and enters his final season as healthy as he has been at any time in his career. Senior quarterback Kyle Nolan, meanwhile, has started for nearly two and a half seasons.

The Hoyas have a massive hole on defense after the graduation of Alec May (16.5 sacks), though junior Phil Novacki will have a chance to fill that role at end. Senior Ettian Scott, who had 16 passes defended last season, is a critical figure in the secondary.

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Fordham
2. Bucknell
3. Colgate
4. Lafayette
5. Lehigh
6. Holy Cross
7. Georgetown

EDMONDS: GREGORY PAYAN/AP

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Chase Edmonds
RB, Fordham

After a magnificent debut season (1,838 yards, 23 TDs) that landed him the Jerry Rice Award as the top freshman in FCS, the 5-9, 185-pound Edmonds is one of the few certainties on a Fordham team that was wiped out by graduation. Expect him to be the central figure in the Rams' offense.

pioneer football league

Dolphins are swimming with strong tide in PFL

BY MICHAEL GENTRY
Staff Writer

No doubt, the automatic FCS playoff bid the Pioneer Football League gained in 2013 has strengthened competitiveness in what was already a scrappy conference. But ironically, the actual winner of the conference season has yet to benefit from it. Jacksonville, like San Diego in 2013, would have advanced to the FCS playoffs last year had it not banned itself from postseason play after a November discovery of improper financial-aid distribution in previous seasons.

Jacksonville (9-2, 7-1) is again the team to beat thanks to senior quarterback Kade Bell, who led the PFL last year with career highs of 3,181 passing yards and 31 touchdowns. His value will be seen most in his ability to produce without three of his top four targets returning at wide receiver. The leading pass catcher, senior Andy Jones (46 receptions), remains, however, and he could see upwards of 60 catches and 10 touchdowns this year. The Dolphins' defense should be steady with linebackers D.J. Howard and Grady Redding (154 combined tackles) and senior defensive back Dallas Jackson (5 interceptions).

San Diego (9-3, 7-1) was the official PFL champion last year with a third straight seven-win conference season. First-year starting running back Jonah Hodges had the second-most rushing yards during the league campaign with 945 yards and he should see more carries in his sophomore go-round with the loss of quarterback Keith Williams and leading receivers Brandon White and Reggie Bell (16 combined TD receptions). Sophomore linebacker Nic Henson (90 tackles, 2.5 sacks) takes over the leading role for graduated All-PFL linebacker Una Hamala on defense. The Toreros' nine wins in 2014 were decided by an average of 8.3 points, which highlights coach Dale Lindsey's ability to guide USD during the tight ones.

TOP NFL PROSPECT

John Hugunin
LB, Drake

Hugunin is the leading tackler for a Drake defense that has been No. 1 in the conference the last two years. His 202 tackles over that stretch yield him a 10.1 average per game. The 5-11, 232-pound fifth-year senior should get more NFL attention if he, as the captain and centerpiece, can keep the defense at the top of the PFL despite key players having graduated on the line.

Dayton (8-3, 6-2) is led by the reigning PFL Offensive Player of the Year, Connor Kascor, who rushed for 1,115 yards and 14 touchdowns in eight conference games last year. Sophomore Blake Bir and fifth-year senior Luke Johnson will battle to replace four-year starter Will Bardo at quarterback. Defensively, junior Nate Sudnick stepped up in 2014 at defensive end with 11.5 tackles for loss and 5.5 sacks. Behind him is All-PFL first-team linebacker Christopher Beaschler (101 tackles) and a stellar secondary (12 INTs, 12 tackles for loss, 23 pass breakups).

Drake (7-4, 6-2) graduated left guard Troy Whitmer, who helped stabilize an offense that often struggled (10th in PFL scoring). Coach Rick Fox says, as the offensive play-caller, he needs to put quarterback Andy Rice (11 TDs, 11 INTs) in better situations. Senior linebacker John Hugunin averaged double-digit tackles last year. His fellow roamers in the middle and in the secondary (16 combined turnovers) should help make Drake the best defense in the conference for another season.

Morehead State (4-8, 3-5) played well offensively in 2014 (third in PFL scoring, second in yards) but had the conference's second-worst defense. Coach Rob Tenyer brought in a new defensive coordinator and returns 11 defensive players who started at least five games last year, most notably linebacker Luke Keller (87 tackles, 6 sacks) and cornerback Justin Grier. On offense, junior quarterback Austin Gahafer returns to try to eclipse his 2,840-yard, 23-touchdown sophomore campaign.

Campbell (5-7, 4-4) coach Mike Minter, the longtime former NFL safety, says being three touchdowns from a 7-1 conference record last year showed him that the Camels can compete for the PFL crown. Their running game should be one of the better ones in the league, with bruising junior backs DeShawn Jones, Keith Goss and Jared Joyner taking turns carrying the ball. Also, graduate-transfer quarterback Kameron Bryant will bring high-level experience under center as a former starter at Appalachian State. Defensive back Brandon Mobley will play with a chip on his shoulder after being snubbed from the All-PFL teams despite three pick-sixes in 2014.

Stetson (5-7, 3-5) has a good supply of playmakers, but improvement in the Pioneer standings isn't likely. Reigning PFL Defensive Player of the Year Donald Payne (185 tackles, 19 tackles for loss) and fellow all-conference honorees Ryan Powers and Chris Atkins combined for 13 interceptions last year. Junior running back Cole Mazza found the end zone 10 times and quarterback Ryan Tetler was fourth in the PFL with 17 touchdown tosses.

Valparaiso (4-8, 2-6) was outscored 76-16 in its first two games last season but finished with a 17-3 win over Butler, which defeated the Crusaders 72-12 in 2013, and a five-point loss to conference champion San Diego on a last-second "Hail Mary" pass. Scott Staal and Ryan Clarke are vying to be Valpo's third starting QB in three seasons—a revolving door that coach Dave Cecchini says is a challenge for him. All-conference senior linebacker Alex Green (108 tackles) will lead the defense.

Butler (4-7, 2-6) had just two all-conference selections last season in offensive lineman Michael Demos and punter Brian Akialis. But coach Jeff Voris considers Demos the leader of the team and points out that Akialis, along with fellow senior, kicker Jonathan Treloar, makes the special teams a weapon for the Bulldogs. Demos will protect senior quarterback Matt Shiltz, who threw 10 touchdown passes in six games before a season-ending hand injury in 2014.

Marist (4-7, 4-4) was dead last in the conference in offense last season, and the Red Foxes were buoyed by a high-performing defense that featured the conference leader in interceptions, Zach Adler (7 picks), and five other players who had 65 or more tackles. Adler is the sole returnee from that group. The offense will lean heavily on senior receiver Matt Tralli (69 receptions).

Davidson (1-11, 0-8) has gone winless in the PFL during the last two seasons and expectations shouldn't be too high. The lone returning all-conference first-teamer is wideout William Morris, who led Pioneer receivers in receptions (98) and receiving yards (1,224) last year. Sophomore Taylor Mitchell (2 TDs, 11 INTs) and junior John Cook will compete for the QB job.

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1 Jacksonville
2 San Diego
3 Dayton
4 Drake
5 Morehead State
6 Campbell
7 Stetson
8 Valparaiso
9 Butler
10 Marist
11 Davidson

HUGUNIN: CHRIS DONAHUE PHOTO COURTESY OF DRAKE UNIVERSITY

Experience will rule the day for SoCon as returning starters abound

BY WILL LONG
Assistant Editor

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1 Chattanooga
2 Wofford
3 Samford
4 Furman
5 Western Carolina
6 The Citadel
7 Mercer
8 VMI
9 East Tennessee State*

**East Tennessee State will compete as an independent in 2015*

If experience counts for something, then the Southern Conference is in for a treat in 2015. Every team returns at least 14 starters from last season, including four teams—Mercer, VMI, Western Carolina and Wofford—that bring back 18 or more.

East Tennessee State will begin playing football for the first time since 2003 although the Bucs will be an independent this season. And there will be two new head coaches around the league as Chris Hatcher takes over at Samford and Scott Wachenheim replaces Sparky Woods at VMI.

Chattanooga (10-4, 7-0) emerged from post-realignment on top of the SoCon, earning the Mocs' first trip to the FCS playoffs since 1984. And coach Russ Huesman will have enough firepower returning to make it another memorable season in the Scenic City. It starts with his son, Jacob Huesman, at quarterback. The younger Huesman (2,731 passing yards, 1,009 rushing yards, 37 total TDs) has won the SoCon Offensive Player of the Year award twice and will operate behind an experienced and veteran offensive line.

Defensively, the Mocs lose the SoCon all-time sack leader in Davis Tull (37.0 sacks), who capped a stellar career with 10.5 sacks in 2014. Chattanooga does return three defensive backs that earned first team All-SoCon honors last season, and defensive end Keionta Davis (5.5 sacks) will anchor the line, although he won't benefit from opponents concentrating on Tull this time around.

Coach Mike Ayers enters his 28th season at **Wofford** (6-5, 4-3) hoping to get the Terriers back among the SoCon elite. And he now has the experienced backfield to take the Terriers' triple option to the next level. Evan Jacks only played in six games last season, but he returns to lead the nation's third best rushing attack (296.7 yards per game). He will have a loaded backfield including fullback Lorenzo Long (930 yards, 15 TDs) and running back Ray Smith (601, 3). Defensive lineman E.J. Speller will spearhead a unit that led the SoCon by allowing just 107.5 rushing yards per game last season.

Chris Hatcher steps into a solid situation at **Samford** (7-4, 5-2) as the Bulldogs return seven starters on both sides of the ball. Hatcher knows the SoCon well, having coached at Georgia Southern, and his fast-paced offense fits the personnel on hand. Quarterback Michael Eubank passed for 2,136 yards and 12 touchdowns in his first year as the starter, and he developed great chemistry with receiver Karel Hamilton (55 receptions, 877 yards, 6 TDs). Junior running back Denzel Williams looks to build off a 918-yard season that saw him find paydirt 16 times.

The biggest task for Samford—who has strung together three straight seven-win seasons for the first time since 1960-62 when Bobby Bowden was the coach—will be replacing All-American free safety Jaquiski Tartt, who finished second on the team with 62 tackles.

No team was more injury riddled than **Furman** (3-9, 2-5) last season. But last year's injuries helped create this year's depth, as the Paladins return a total 36 players that have registered a start in their career. Quarterback Reese Hannon suffered a fractured ankle in the first game, but he will be ready to go in 2015. Hannon will throw to an experienced corps of receivers, led by Jordan Snellings (50 receptions, 727 yards, 4 TDs), Andrej Suttles (41, 497, 1) and tight end Duncan Fletcher (36, 442, 2). On defense, the Paladins will be led by linebackers Cory Magwood (SoCon high 123 tackles) and Carl Rider (136 tackles in 2013), who played just three plays before suffering a season-ending torn labrum in 2014.

HUESMAN: JIM COLE / AP

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Jacob Huesman
QB, Chattanooga

Huesman (6-2, 220) wowed NFL scouts with his numbers at the Mocs Junior Day. The two-time SoCon Offensive Player of the Year is the son of head coach Russ Huesman and has the intangibles and savvy to get a shot at the next level.

Western Carolina (7-5, 5-2) rewarded coach Mark Speir with a new contract after he led the Catamounts to their first winning record since 2005. The fun could just be starting in Cullowhee as quarterback Troy Mitchell (2,541 yards, 20 TDs) and the entire offense return intact. Mitchell set the school record by accounting for 3,096 total yards (555 rushing yards). Only two starters depart from the team, but linebacker Christon Gill (112 tackles) and defensive back Ace Clark (77) were two team leaders that will be difficult to replace.

The Citadel (5-7, 3-4) is the only SoCon team that doesn't return its starting quarterback. Dominique Allen, who threw his first career touchdown pass against Florida State last year, is the frontrunner to take over for Aaron Miller. The Bulldogs return all five starters along the offensive line as well as slotback Cam Jackson (505 yards, 3 TDs) and fullbacks Tyler Renew (761, 5) and Isiaha Smith (591, 5) for second-year coach Mike Houston.

Mercer (6-6, 1-6) coach Bobby Lamb returns all 22 starters from last season's team that lost four SoCon games by a touchdown or less. Running back Alex Lakes (1,107 yards, 17 TDs) will be a focal point of the offense after earning first-team all-conference honors in 2014.

Scott Wachenheim takes over for Sparky Woods at **VMI** (2-10, 1-6) and has reigning SoCon Freshman of the Year Al Cobb at the controls of the offense. Cobb set school records with 2,971 passing yards and 20 touchdowns, but the Keydets must shore up a defense that allowed 496.4 yards and 41.4 points per game.

East Tennessee State will participate as an independent in 2015, giving coach Carl Torbush—the former North Carolina head man—time to evaluate and upgrade his roster before the Bucs join the SoCon in 2016 as a full-fledged member.

SOUTHLAND

SOUTHLAND.ORG

Loaded Bearkats should make strong run at FCS championship

BY TIM BUCKLEY
Lafayette (La.) Daily Advertiser

Three Southland Conference members have gone to the FCS playoffs the last two years, and three realistically can go again this season. That's especially so with Sam Houston State, which went to the 2011 and 2012 title games and returns practically everyone from a 2014 semifinal team.

Making it easier: Two top programs in the league don't even face each other in 2015.

Each Southland team except Houston Baptist plays a nine-game conference schedule this year, but SHSU and Southeastern Louisiana—the 2014 co-champs—won't meet in the regular season.

All-Southland running back Keshawn Hill is one of only two 2014 starters not back at **Sam Houston State** (11-5, 7-1 Southland), which after four straight FCS postseason trips looks like a legit national title contender.

Starting quarterback Jared Johnson—who threw for 3,054 yards and 21 touchdowns last season, and was one rushing yard shy of 1,000—was limited early in the spring by shoulder surgery, and backup Don King III had a sore arm, giving UAB transfer Jeremiah Briscoe an opportunity to impress.

But under second-year coach K.C. Keeler, the Bearkats, who rebounded after opening last season 1-3, were still light-years ahead of 2014's spring pace.

Protecting those QBs will be highly regarded tackle Donald Jackson III. The top receiving target is wideout LaDarius Brown, who had 807 receiving yards in 2014.

Leading the SHSU defense will be end P.J. Hall, who was named 2014 Southland Freshman of the Year after making 20 tackles for loss (12 sacks) for minus-118 yards.

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Jonathan Woodard
DE, Central Arkansas

The Southland Conference's 2014 Defensive Player of the Year, Woodard is already a three-time first-team all-conference pick with 25 career sacks. He led the Southland in sacks with 10 last season and had 18.5 tackles for loss with one interception.

Longtime former Central Arkansas coach Clint Conque delivered a five-win turnaround in his first season directing **Stephen F. Austin** (8-5, 5-3), which made its first postseason appearance last year since 2010. He did it largely on the arm of son Zach Conque, a UTSA transfer who threw for 2,733 yards to win Southland Newcomer of the Year. Conque has wide receiver Aaron Thomas (53 catches) back as his top target.

The Lumberjacks will have a hard time, however, replacing All-America running back Gus Johnson, who was named Southland Player of the Year after gaining a school-record 1,601 yards last season.

With quarterback Bryan Bennett gone after back-to-back playoff appearances, **Southeastern Louisiana** (9-4, 7-1) also has a big loss to overcome. The Oregon transfer and 2013 Southland Player of the Year produced 7,237 yards of total offense (5,522 passing) after two seasons in Hammond. Louisiana transfer D'Shaie Landor and juco import Larry Cutbirth will compete to replace Bennett.

Cornerback Harlan Miller leads a secondary that also features Denzel Thompson, ex-LSU players Micah Eugene and Derrick Raymond and Tulane transfer Jordan Batiste. Return specialist Xavier Roberson, meanwhile, is a pro prospect.

End Jonathan Woodard is the Southland's reigning Defensive Player of the Year at **Central Arkansas** (6-6, 5-3).

The Bears lose 2,380-yard passer Ryan Howard and receiver Dezmin Lewis, but get standout kick returner Jatavious Wilson back.

Coach Steve Campbell also must replace stellar offensive lineman Cole Caruthers to protect QB Taylor Reed on a club that averaged a conference-high 40.7 points in 2014. A good place to start is 6-7, 316-pound senior Kyle Stouffer.

Lamar (8-4, 5-3) tied its school wins record in 2014, but coach Ray Woodard must replace all-time passing leader Caleb Berry. Joe Minden played nine games last season for Stephen F. Austin, but transferred to the Cardinals after backing up Zach Conque at SFA. Carson Earp was a 2,000-yard juco passer in 2014. Other impact transfers include wideouts Brendan Langley (ex-Georgia) and Dominique Wheeler (Texas Tech) and linebacker Cameron Hampton (Texas).

Quarterback Parker McKenzie is back after throwing for 3,084 yards and 22 touchdowns in 2014 for **Abilene Christian** (6-6, 4-4), which begins its third year in NCAA Division 1 coming off a season-ending win over Stephen F. Austin and seeking its 10th straight non-losing campaign.

With running backs De'Andre Brown (962 yards rushing) and Herschel Sims (559) plus receiver Cedric Gilbert providing the offense, that streak could continue.

Nine offensive and seven defensive starters return for coach Matt Viator at **McNeese State** (6-5, 4-4), which opens at LSU coming off three straight Southland losses to end last season. Quarterbacks Daniel Sams and Tyler Bolfing split time in 2014. Sams is especially effective in the rushing game, where he'll get help from returning tailback Ryan Ross. Texas A&M transfer Isaiah Golden will give the defensive line a boost.

Northwestern State (6-6, 4-4), still seeking its first winning season since 2008 after back-to-back .500 campaigns under coach Jay Thomas, loses record-setting quarterback Zach Adkins and eight defensive starters. Returning signal-callers Daniel Hazlewood and J.D. Almond and juco transfer Joel Blumenthal lead a cast of replacement candidates who'll have wideout Ed Eagan (school-record 73 catches in '14) to throw to.

It's all uphill for ex-Louisiana assistant Tim Rebowe at **Nicholls State** (0-12, 0-8), which yielded an FCS-worst 538 yards per game in 2014 and has lost 18 straight. But the Colonels return 1,000-yard rusher Michael Henry and quarterback Tuskani Figaro, who redshirted as a junior but passed for 1,000-plus yards and scampered for a school single-season mark of 1,103 yards in 2013.

Lineman Corey Lee (14.5 tackles for loss), linebacker Padyn Giebler (76 tackles) and cornerback Kobie Douglas (10 pass breakups) anchor the defense for coach Larry Kennan at **Incarnate Word** (2-9, 2-6). Quarterback Trent Brittain (1,893 passing yards in 2013) returns after breaking an ankle in UIW's 2014 opener and has NFL prospect Cole Wick (6-7, 245) back at tight end.

Houston Baptist (2-9, 1-7) won a couple games for coach Vic Shealy in its first FCS season. The Huskies are eager to see what kind of difference former Florida QB Max Staver makes after two juco stops.

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Sam Houston State
2. Stephen F. Austin
3. Southeastern Louisiana
4. Central Arkansas
5. Lamar
6. Abilene Christian*
7. McNeese State
8. Northwestern State
9. Nicholls State
10. Incarnate Word*
11. Houston Baptist

** Not eligible for FCS playoffs*

WOODARD: ROGELIO V. SOLIS / AP

Gibbs drawing comparisons to McNair at ASU

BY LUT WILLIAMS
Black College Sports Page

Below-par NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) scores continue to plague SWAC football.

Four SWAC teams under penalties—Alabama State, Mississippi Valley State, Prairie View A&M and Southern—did not have spring practice nor will be allowed to participate in postseason NCAA play. While they will be eligible for the Dec. 5 SWAC title game, the sanctions preclude participation in the new Celebration Bowl vs. the MEAC champion on Dec. 19.

Two of the sanctioned teams have new coaches: Willie Simmons at Prairie View and Brian Jenkins at Alabama State.

On the field, everyone is chasing defending champion Alcorn State.

EAST DIVISON

Alcorn State (10-3, 7-2) dominated the SWAC last year, scoring 49.4 points per game and giving up just 22.3, and returns the horses to do it again.

Quarterback John Gibbs Jr. ran for 1,006 yards and 11 TDs and passed for more than 2,400 yards with 21 scores en route to being named co-Offensive Player of the Year. He returns for his senior campaign with his entire offensive line intact. They also pave the way for the league's top rushing attack (286.0 yards per game) that features scatback Darryan Ragsdale (691 yards, seven TDs) and power back Aaron Baker (725 yards, 13 TDs).

The defense is anchored by three All-SWAC picks—lineman Darrien Moody, linebacker Damon Watkins and safety Warren Gatewood.

Reggie Barlow was let go as coach at **Alabama State** (7-5, 5-4) after five straight winning seasons, including a 32-13 conference record over that span. Brian Jenkins, who won four MEAC titles in five years at Bethune-Cookman, is charged with getting the Hornets to the next level, although at press time he was being investigated by the NCAA for allegations of player abuse and practice-time violations at his former school.

Quarterback Ellis Richardson and lineman Shaquille Powell are intriguing juco transfers expected to contribute immediately. Richardson will challenge incumbent quarterback Daniel Duhart. Linebacker Kourtney Berry (128 tackles) and safety Najee Bright (5 INTs) are first-team All-SWAC selections on defense.

Despite the talents of SWAC passing leader LeMontez Ivy (3,209 yards, 24 TDs) and productive receiver Dan Williams (72 receptions, 990 yards, 9 TDs), weak offensive-line play kept **Jackson State** (5-7, 3-6) from fully implementing new coach Harold Jackson's run-and-shoot offense. Jackson beefed up the line on the recruiting trail and has UNLV transfer Jarin Morikawa pushing Ivy. Defensive standout Javancy Jones (107 tackles, 18 tackles for loss) will go back to end from linebacker in new coordinator Alonzo Lee's 4-3 scheme.

Juco transfer De'Angelo Ballard (Southwest Mississippi CC) is the expected starter at quarterback in coach James Spady's read-option offense at **Alabama A&M** (4-8, 3-6). Bryan Bower and Harvey Harris are the chief ballcarriers while converted QB Brandon Wells joins a receiving corps that includes breakaway threat Octavius Miles (12 receptions, 30.3 yards per catch, 5 TDs), O'Darius Williams and Tevin McKenzie.

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

EAST DIVISION
1 Alcorn State
2 Alabama State
3 Jackson State
4 Alabama A&M
5 Mississippi Valley State

WEST DIVISION
1 Southern
2 Grambling State
3 Prairie View A&M
4 Arkansas-Pine Bluff
5 Texas Southern

TOP NFL PROSPECT

John Gibbs Jr.
QB, Alcorn State

At 6-6 and 220 pounds, Gibbs has the rare combination of running ability, size and throwing accuracy coveted in today's NFL. He passed for more than 2,000 yards, completed 58 percent of his throws and ran for 1,000-plus yards while delivering Alcorn State its first SWAC title since the days of the late, great Steve McNair. Like McNair, he is fast enough to run away from defenders and strong enough to run through them.

Sophomores Anthony Lanier (end) and Bryan Brower (linebacker) are leaders of a young and growing defense.

A win over former employer Jackson State, a first for the Delta Devils vs. JSU in 19 years, was one of a few highlights for Rick Comegy in his first year at **Mississippi Valley State** (2-9, 1-8). He was hit hard with the loss of 19 seniors, most of them on defense. Quarterback Quintavius Peterson returns for his senior season after sharing the 2014 SWAC Newcomer of the Year award.

WEST DIVISON

Freshman quarterback Austin Howard, sophomore running back Lenard Tillery (1,196 yards, 9 TDs) and sophomore wideout/kick returner Willie Quinn (62 receptions, 892 yards, 5 TDs) were key parts of the youth movement that propelled **Southern** (9-4, 8-1) to the West Division title. They return behind a retooled offensive line. The Jaguars get back eight of their top 10 defensive stoppers, including tackle Gabe Echols and corner Danny Johnson, who earned second-team All-SWAC honors last year.

First-year head coach Broderick Fobbs got **Grambling State** (7-5, 7-2) back on track and into title contention and won Coach-of-the-Year honors for his efforts. Returning quarterback Johnathan Williams led the league in passing yards (272.7 per game), passing efficiency and total offense (326.4 yards per game), triggering a unit that returns all of its playmakers.

Former Alcorn State offensive coordinator Willie Simmons takes over from Heishma Northern at **Prairie View A&M** (5-5, 5-4), though offense wasn't the problem for the Panthers last year. The defense gave up the most yards in the league (463.6 per game).

Departed quarterback Jerry Lovelocke is getting NFL looks while Simmons searches for a replacement to take advantage of senior running back and all-purpose-yardage leader Johnta Hebert (1,063 rushing yards, 15 TDs, 225.3 all-purpose yards per game) and 6-4 wideout Nick Pitre (30 receptions, 7 TDs). South Carolina transfer wide receiver Shaq Roland is a heralded addition.

Arkansas-Pine Bluff (4-7, 3-6) returns its top 10 tacklers including All-SWAC first-teamers in defensive end Demarcus Berry (52 tackles, 8 sacks) and free safety Kevin Rucker (5 INTs) and second-team linebacker Willie Duncan III (100 tackles). But the unit must improve on numbers that were at or near the bottom in nearly every statistical category.

Four players competed in the spring to replace productive QB Benjamin Anderson. The Golden Lions' weapons on offense include receivers Willie Young (45 receptions, 9 TDs) and Marvante King and running back Brian Handley (820 rushing yards).

Texas Southern (5-6, 3-6) started last season with four wins, two of them against conference opponents, but ended with five straight losses and six in the last seven games. That may be this year's reality with new starters at quarterback and running back.

GIBBS JR.: ERIC CHRISTIAN SMITH / AP

New kids on the block quickly making inroads in Division 2

BY GREGG DEWALT | *Florence (Ala.) TimesDaily*

Plenty of familiar traditional powers still roam across the Division 2 football landscape, but no longer do those teams have a complete stranglehold when it comes to winning national championships.

In recent years, several relatively fledgling teams with no rich football history to speak of have burst onto the scene, grabbing the spotlight away from some annual powerhouses that seemed to always find their way into the championship game.

These days, Division 2 football no longer is dominated by a handful of teams. Instead, the division is deeper than it has ever been, and it's getting deeper every year.

Two teams that have supplanted some of the old guard are Colorado State-Pueblo of the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference (RMAC), which won the 2014 national championship, and Ohio Dominican, which has quickly moved into the upper echelon of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC).

Colorado State-Pueblo didn't field a team from 1984 until 2008, but it took only seven years for coach John Wristen to build the Thunderwolves into a national champion.

Ohio Dominican has only been playing football since 2004, but coach Bill Conley has the Panthers knocking on the door of their first national title.

How close is Ohio Dominican to that first championship?

"Pueblo beat us 31-28 in the playoffs," Conley notes.

It doesn't take long for Wristen and Conley to explain how they have been able to build successful programs in a short amount of time.

"One thing we have is a great university and city, and we have outstanding facilities," says Wristen, who was charged with bringing back football to Colorado State-Pueblo after the lengthy absence. "The main thing is that we've been able to attract one hell of a coaching staff and keep everybody together."

Conley offers up a similar tale.

Jared Buck, QB, Slippery Rock

"First thing, our location helps us out a lot," he says. "Columbus is a good recruiting tool. Most Division 2 schools are in small towns. ... Half my staff is Ohio State guys, and half played in the NFL."

There's no arguing Colorado State-Pueblo and Ohio Dominican have created a blueprint of success for other young programs, whose ranks are growing. Florida Tech, which has had a team for only two years, already is a rising power in the Gulf South Conference (GSC). West Florida is starting a program and will play its first game in 2016. Sioux Falls is in its third year in Division 2 and is a rising power.

How long will it take these programs to make their own statements? Based on the success of Colorado State-Pueblo and Ohio Dominican, it'll likely be sooner rather than later.

But, when the season arrives, everybody will be gunning for Minnesota-Duluth, a team with plenty of tradition and the talent to win it all.

PRESEASON TOP 25

Minnesota-Duluth (13-1) is one of the traditional powers always in the mix for a national title. With six starters returning on defense–including noseguard Jonathan Harden, end Jake Lambrecht, linebacker Beau Bates, cornerback Darion Fletcher and safety David Boegel–it will be tough to score on the Bulldogs. All-purpose QB Drew Bauer, who accounted for 38 TDs in 2014 (13 rush, 25 pass), and tailback Logan Lauters (1,531 rushing yards, 14 TDs) are among six offensive starters returning.

Ferris State (11-1) won its first GLIAC title in 15 years behind the stellar play of Harlon Hill Trophy winner Jason Vander

DIVISION 2 PRESEASON TOP 25

1. Minnesota-Duluth
2. Ferris State
3. Colorado State-Pueblo
4. Ohio Dominican
5. Concord
6. Minnesota State-Mankato
7. Northwest Missouri
8. West Georgia
9. Slippery Rock
10. West Texas A&M
11. Valdosta State
12. Colorado School of Mines
13. Bloomsburg
14. Pittsburg State
15. Angelo State
16. North Alabama
17. Ouachita Baptist
18. West Chester
19. Lenoir-Rhyne
20. Sioux Falls
21. Delta State
22. Central Washington
23. Virginia State
24. Tuskegee
25. Azusa Pacific

DIVISION 2 ALL-AMERICA TEAM

OFFENSE

QB	Jason Vander Laan, Ferris State, Sr.
RB	Anthony Bilal, Lake Erie, Sr.
RB	Cameron McDondle, CSU-Pueblo, Sr.
OL	Joe Ray, Lenoir-Rhyne, Sr.
OL	Ryan Geiger, Bloomsburg, Sr.
OL	Jim Walsh, Grand Valley State, Sr.
OL	Terrance Owens, Miles, Sr.
OL	Zach Voytek, New Haven, Sr.
TE	Cole Spurgeon, Colo. School of Mines, Sr.
WR	Marquis Cushon, Pittsburg State, Sr.
WR	Reece Horn, Indianapolis, Sr.

DEFENSE

DL	Joshua Gordon, Minnesota-Mankato, Sr.
DL	Marcus Martin, Slippery Rock, So.
DL	Justin Zimmer, Ferris State, Sr.
DL	Darrius Caldwell, West Georgia, Sr.
LB	Tyler Henderson, Minnesota-Mankato, Sr.
LB	Connor Harris, Lindenwood (Mo.), Jr.
LB	Kenny Murphy, Valdosta State, Sr.
DB	Solomon St. Pierre, Sioux Falls, Sr.
DB	Michael Jordan, Missouri Western, Sr.
DB	Philbert Martial, North Alabama, Jr.
DB	Billy Eakins, Ohio Dominican, Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	Brent Wahle, Ohio Dominican, Sr.
P	Kyle Clark, Newberry, Sr.

BUCK: CARLOS OSORIO / AP

Laan, who last year rushed for 1,466 yards and 20 TDs and threw for 2,381 yards and 30 scores. Also returning is two-time All-GLIAC defensive end Justin Zimmer. The Bulldogs were unbeaten in the regular season, including a 34-19 win over Ohio Dominican, but had their playoff run spoiled in a rematch in the second round.

Colorado State-Pueblo (14-1) rode a stingy defense and won close games on the way to its first national championship last year. Only five teams scored more than 20 points against the Thunderwolves. Running back Cameron McDondle (2,014 yards, 16 TDs) is among seven offensive starters returning.

Ohio Dominican (11-2) keeps closing in on a national championship, and if the Panthers can find a replacement for QB Matt Miller it might come this season. Running back Brandon Schoen returns after rushing for 1,134 yards and 12 TDs, and so do receivers Dez Stewart and Ronald McCloud, who combined for 113 catches and 1,661 yards. All-America kicker Brent Wahle is a real weapon.

Concord (13-1) returns nine starters from an offense that averaged 42.4 points per game and surpassed the 50-point mark seven times. Included among the returnees: QB Brian Novak (33 TD passes), AFCA first-team All-America running back Calvinaugh Jones (1,734 yards) and wide receivers T.J. Smith (1,157 yards, 13 TDs) and Ryan Stewart (12 TDs).

Minnesota State-Mankato (14-1) needs to rebuild its offensive and defensive fronts in order to return to the championship hunt. The Mavericks must replace four offensive linemen and three defensive linemen. *AP* Little All-American Tyler Henderson (122 tackles) and second-teamer Joshua Gordon (17.5 sacks) return to a line that helped the Mavericks' defense allow only 12.9 points per game.

Northwest Missouri (10-2) lost *AP* Little All-America defensive end Matt Longacre and three of its top four wide receivers. The Bearcats are still smarting from a regular-season loss to rival Pittsburg State and a first-round playoff exit against Minnesota-Duluth. They'll be led by quarterback Brady Bolles, who ran for eight scores and passed for 18 last year.

West Georgia (12-3) made a run at the national championship in Will Hall's first season as head coach, and things should only get better this year. The Wolves have a dominant defense with the return of ends Darrius Caldwell (13 sacks, 17.5 tackles for loss) and Alex Armah (7, 14.5).

Slippery Rock (9-3) beat Bloomsburg in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) Championship Game before losing to West Chester in the NCAA playoffs. "The Rock" will build its defense around *AP* Little All-American Marcus Martin, who had a school-record 16 sacks.

West Texas A&M (6-5) had five games nullified in Lone Star Conference play for using a player who was academically ineligible, but the Buffs are primed to make a run at the conference title. Twenty-one starters return, including tailback Geremy Aldridge-Mitchell, who had 1,342 yards and 21 TDs, and QB Preston Rabb (2,912 passing yards).

Valdosta State (10-3) spent much of last season living on the edge. The Blazers won four games by a total of 13 points, including a pair of two-point playoff wins. Coach David Dean's team likes a physical style of play and returns the rushing tandem of Austin Scott and Cedric O'Neal, who combined for 1,816 yards and 16 TDs.

If anybody can unseat Colorado State-Pueblo from its RMAC perch, it's **Colorado School of Mines** (10-2), which scored more than 40 points seven times. New coach Gregg Brandon takes over for Bob Stitt, who left to take the head-coaching job at Montana last December. Brandon was head coach at Bowling Green from 2003-08. He inherits QB Justin Dvorak, who threw for 4,287 yards and 36 TDs (10 INTs) last year.

Bloomsburg (11-2) played in the national quarterfinals last season for the first time since 2008, but coach Paul Darragh has a tough task in replacing graduated Eddie Mateo, who had 25 TDs and rushed for 1,278 yards. He also has to find seven new starters on a defense that forced 43 turnovers. But Tim Kelly returns at QB and running back Dai'shon Munger is coming off a 783-yard rushing season.

How close was **Pittsburg State** (11-2) to perfection in 2014? Its two losses were by a total of four points, including a 24-21 overtime defeat to Minnesota State-Mankato in the playoffs. Coach Tim Beck must replace Harlon Hill Trophy finalist Anthony Abenoja at quarterback, but star wideout Marquise Cushon (69 catches, 1,301 yards) should help soften that blow.

Angelo State's (9-3) last four wins in 2014–including two in the playoffs–were by a total of 11 points before Colorado State-Pueblo ended its season. The Rams should be fine on offense, where QB Kyle Washington returns after rushing for 911 yards and throwing for 3,236.

Close wins were the norm last season for **North Alabama** (9-2), which captured a share of the Gulf South Conference title in part due to four wins by a total of 16 points. The Lions should be efficient on offense with eight returning starters, including QB Luke Wingo and running back Lamonte Thompson.

Ouachita Baptist (10-1) won the Great American Conference (GAC) and took Minnesota-Duluth to the wire in a second-round 48-45 playoff loss. Coach Todd Knight's team must replace 12 All-GAC performers, including running back Steven Kehner (1,183 yards, 20 TDs).

Coach Bill Zwaan must replace nearly half his starters at **West Chester** (11-2), including QB Sean McCartney, who threw a Division 2-best 42 touchdown passes. But Brandon Monk rushed for 1,296 yards, and tight end Tim Brown (53 catches, 1,059 yards, 17 TDs) should become a favorite target for the new QB.

Coach Ian Shields' first season at **Lenoir-Rhyne** (11-1) ended with a two-point loss to Valdosta State in the second round of the NCAA playoffs. To make another deep run, Shields has to rebuild a backfield that loses QB Miles Freeman and running backs Chris Robinson and Jarrod Spears. Michael Patrick is the top returning running back after rushing for 788 yards and nine scores in 2014.

In only its third season in Division 2, **Sioux Falls** (11-1) cracked the Top 25 last year with an impressive display on both sides of the ball by averaging 42.7 points and allowing 17.4 points per game. The Cougars were second nationally with 26 interceptions, including 10 by returning strong safety Solomon St. Pierre.

Delta State (9-2) tied for the GSC title with North Alabama but was ousted from the NCAA playoffs in the second round by West Georgia. The Statesmen have a strong pass-catch combo back in QB Tyler Sullivan and wideout Casey Osborne.

With 20 starters returning, **Central Washington** (7-4) should challenge Azusa Pacific for supremacy in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference. Tovar Sanchez (12 sacks) and AFCA All-American Isaiah Davis lead the returning defensive starters, while QB Jake Nelson (23 TD passes) heads the offense.

Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association champion **Virginia State** (10-3) started 0-2 and then won 10 in a row last season, including a playoff victory over LIU-Post in its first NCAA postseason appearance. Running back Kavon Bellamy is the top returnee. He's coming off a 989-yard, 13-TD rushing campaign.

Tuskegee (9-3) remains the team to beat in the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC). Coach Willie Slater's team must replace four offensive linemen and three secondary members.

Azusa Pacific (11-1) coach Victor Santa Cruz has the task of replacing D2 rushing leader Terrell Watson, but Chad Jefferies was 9-1 as a starting rookie QB last year and should be better as a sophomore.

Whitewater looks to stay perfect, but Mount Union is the pick

BY MIKE GOENS | *Florence (Ala.) TimesDaily*

DIVISION 3 PRESEASON TOP 25

1. Mount Union (14-1 in 2014)
2. Linfield (11-2)
3. Wisconsin-Whitewater (15-0)
4. Washington & Jefferson (10-2)
5. Mary Hardin-Baylor (11-1)
6. Wesley (12-2)
7. Saint John's (10-2)
8. Wheaton (11-1)
9. Wartburg (12-1)
10. Wittenberg (9-2)
11. Johns Hopkins (11-1)
12. Wisconsin-Oshkosh (9-2)
13. Texas Lutheran (9-2)
14. John Carroll (11-2)
15. Thomas More (8-2)
16. Hobart (12-1)
17. North Central (8-2)
18. St. Thomas (8-3)
19. St. John Fisher (9-2)
20. Rowan (7-4)
21. Widener (12-1)
22. Muhlenberg (9-2)
23. Franklin (8-3)
24. Hardin-Simmons (6-3)
25. MIT (10-1)

DIVISION 3 ALL-AMERICA TEAM

OFFENSE

QB	Joe Callahan, Wesley, Sr.
RB	Sam Sura, Saint John's, Sr.
RB	Marquis Barrolle, Texas Lutheran, Jr.
OL	Michael Frank, Mount Union, Sr.
OL	Conner Peters, Wisconsin-Whitewater, Sr.
OL	Colin Egan, Johns Hopkins, Sr.
OL	Anthony Lattina, John Carroll, Sr.
OL	Zach Crossey, Washington & Jefferson, Sr.
TE	Joe Sommers, Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Sr.
WR	Dushawn Brown, Denison, Sr.
WR	Roman Namdar, Mount Union, Sr.

DEFENSE

DL	Alex Hoff, Linfield, Sr.
DL	Zach Franz, Wisconsin-Whitewater, Sr.
DL	Teidrick Smith, Mary Hardin-Baylor, Jr.
DL	Tom Lally, Mount Union, Sr.
LB	Adam Dansdill, Wheaton, Sr.
LB	Julian Turner, Trinity, Jr.
LB	Gunner Tranel, Wartburg, Sr.
DB	Sean Titus, Widener, Jr.
DB	Austin Tennessee, Stevenson, Jr.
DB	Alex Kocheff, Mount Union, Sr.
DB	Eric Gargiulo, Montclair State, Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	Evan Grissom, Wittenberg, Sr.
P	Tyler Hunt, Guilford, Sr.

There's no hint of doubt or nervousness in Kevin Bullis' voice. He says he's eager for the challenge of being head coach at the most successful NCAA Division 3 football program over the past decade.

Wisconsin-Whitewater has appeared in nine of the past 10 Amos Alonzo Stagg Bowls, winning six national championships during the process. Former head coach Lance Leipold has moved to the University at Buffalo–along with four of his assistants–and Bullis has been promoted as his replacement.

"For the past 15 years I have known I wanted to be a head coach, so I have looked at opportunities to learn and have watched Lance," Bullis says. "I looked at (him) manage games and programs. So, I've been a student of head coaching. I'm ready."

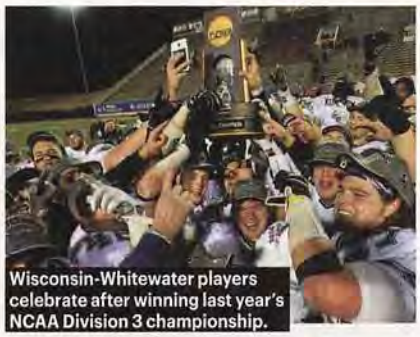
Bullis knows expectations remain high for the Warhawks to repeat as national champions this year, but insists pressure won't be a burden.

"We've never looked at it here as winning the national championship being our goal," says Bullis, 49, who has been an assistant at Whitewater for seven seasons and has coordinated the team's successful run defense.

PRESEASON TOP 25

A familiar face could be standing in Whitewater's way this year. **Mount Union** and Whitewater have faced off nine times in the national championship game since 2005, with the Warhawks winning six. The Purple Raiders have missed playing in the title game only twice since 1996 and have played in the Stagg Bowl 10 straight years. Overall, they have 11 championships on their resume as well as a 210-9 record since 2000.

The key for Mount Union will be replacing quarterback Kevin Burke, the nation's top player last season. Taurice Scott and Nick Peyakov are quality options there, and receiver Roman Namdar and lineman Michael Frank will be offensive standouts. The defense, which returns eight starters, has big-play talent in safety Alex Kocheff, lineman Tom Lally and linebacker Hank Spencer.



Wisconsin-Whitewater players celebrate after winning last year's NCAA Division 3 championship.

Linfield is the last team other than Whitewater or Mount Union to win a national championship (2004), and the Wildcats seem to be a play or two away each year. They lost by six points in the semifinals against Whitewater last season.

Quarterback Sam Riddle had 34 passing touchdowns and ran for 13 more as a sophomore. Tailback Spencer Payne averaged five yards per carry. The defense will be led by first-team All-America end Alex Hoff, who had 15.5 sacks and 27.5 tackles for loss a year ago.

Wisconsin-Whitewater enters the season with a 32-game winning streak. Seven starters return on both sides of the ball, but finding a new quarterback is the key. Chris Nelson is likely to earn that job. He will have plenty of protection, as all five linemen are back, including All-American Conner Peters. There are also plenty of offensive weapons at the new QB's disposal with the rushing tandem of Jordan Ratliffe and Dennis Moore–who combined for nearly 2,100 yards last year–and receiver Joe Worth (45 catches for 526 yards).

Linebacker Justin Dischler should help the Warhawks live up to their reputation for being among the country's best rush defenses.

After making two Stagg Bowl appearances in the mid-1990s, **Washington & Jefferson** will be in the hunt this year and should be a sure bet to add to its nation's-best 24 playoff appearances. Eighteen of the starting 22 return from a 10-2 squad.

Star power returns to the offense in the form of running back Ryan Ruffing (1,605 rushing yards, 270 receiving yards and 29 TDs), quarterback Pete Coughlin (3,257

CELEBRATION: DON PETERSEN / AP

passing yards, 31 TDs), receivers Daniel Lis (82 catches for 879 yards) and Jesse Zubik (55 catches for 881 yards) and tackle Zach Crossey. On defense, end Jon Turner had 18 tackles for loss in 2014.

Mary Hardin-Baylor has been a consistent contender, making the playoffs in 13 of the past 14 seasons. There are six offensive and seven defensive starters back for the Cru. They also have a favorable schedule with seven home games. Three of the top performers are on defense: end Teidrick Smith, linebacker Baylor Mullins and safety Jaedon Johnson. Depth at the tackles and linebacker will be key, however.

Moving into the competitive New Jersey Athletic Conference will provide challenges for **Wesley**, but the Wolverines will be favored to win their new league. The Dover, Del., school has made the NCAA playoffs 10 straight years, reaching the semifinals six times and the quarterfinals twice. With eight starters back, Wesley will have one of the nation's best offenses. Quarterback Joe Callahan passed for 4,190 yards and 46 touchdowns last year.

Saint John's (Minn.) continues to fight its way back to the national elite after four seasons that haven't met its dominating standards. The Johnnies have 15 starters returning from a 10-2 team. Sam Sura is one of the nation's top runners. He rushed for 1,769 yards last year. Evan Clark is an explosive receiver/return man.

Fifteen starters return at **Wheaton** (Ill.). The defense is built around linebackers Adam Dansdill (133 tackles) and Mikey Swider (101) as well as linemen Logan McRae (8 sacks) and Josh Aldrin. Offensively, quarterback Johnny Peltz can damage defenses throwing and running. Receivers Luke Thorson and Keegan Kemp are threats, and tackle Matt Snebold is a leader.

Wartburg set a school record for wins last year with 12 before losing to Whitewater by four points in the national semifinals. The Knights have two of their best offensive weapons returning in quarterback Logan Schrader (3,187 passing yards, 37 TDs) and running back Brandon Domeyer (1,212 rushing yards, 19 TDs). Linebackers Gunner Tranel (123 tackles) and Will Jansen lead the defense.

Forty lettermen are back at **Wittenberg**, including eight starters on offense and six on defense. Quarterback Zack Jenkins will lead the Tigers as they try to add to the second-highest win total in Division 3 history (736). The top two running backs and receivers are back along with three offensive linemen. Senior wideout Zach Culvahouse had 81 catches for 1,179 yards last year. The defense will be led by tackle Josh Bannick.

Making the playoffs has become a habit for **Johns Hopkins**, which has advanced to postseason play in five of the past six years. The keys for the Bluejays will be replacing three players on the defensive line and finding a starter at quarterback, which will feature a battle between Will Nunn and Jonathan Germano.

Wisconsin-Oshkosh expects to challenge Whitewater for the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference title. The Titans have won 14 of their last 15 league games. Among the nine returning offensive starters are tight end Joe Sommers, a big-play threat, running back Dylan Hecker and receiver CJ Blackburn. The biggest area of concern is the defensive front.

After earning its first playoff appearance last year, **Texas Lutheran** should be strong again with 13 starters back. That list includes All-American running back Marquis Barrolle (1,792 rushing yards and 15 TDs), quarterback Trenton White and receiver Caleb Oliver. On defense, linebacker Darian Chandler had 16.5 tackles for loss last year and safety Drake Dowling had five picks.

John Carroll is poised to challenge Ohio Athletic Conference rival Mount Union, but finding a new quarterback will be critical. Anthony Lattina is one of three offensive linemen back. Tight end Brendan Carozzoni and receiver Marshall Howell are big-play performers. The defense revolves around tackle David Porter and cornerback Michael Hollins.

An explosive offense should help Regis Scafe make a smooth transition as the new head coach at **Thomas More**. The longtime former John Carroll mentor takes over the reins at the northern Kentucky college for Jim Hilvert, who resigned to take a high-profile prep job in nearby Cincinnati. Quarterback Jensen Gebhardt, receiver Goose Cohorn and lineman Jake Henderson return to an offensive unit that averaged 45 points and 533.8 yards of offense per game last year.

Hobart hasn't lost a regular-season game since 2011 and looks to be solid again if key replacements are found on offense where only four starters return. Tailback Conner Hartigan will be counted on early to offset losses on offense.

Jeff Thorne will step in for his father, John, as head coach at **North Central** (Ill.) and will have plenty of experience to build on with 15 starters back. The Cardinals, 64-6 in conference play during the past 10 seasons, have quarterback Dylan Warden, running back Oshayne Brown and guard Eric Knaperek returning.

St. Thomas (Minn.) has appeared in five of the past six NCAA playoffs and has 15 starters returning from an 8-3 squad. Quarterback will be a crucial part to the puzzle this year, with Alex Fenske and John Gould battling for the start. Running backs Jack Kaiser and Nick Waldvogel are big threats in the ground game. The defense will lean on cornerback Mozus Ikuenobe.

St. John Fisher led the Empire 8 Conference in several offensive categories last year and returns nine starters. Running backs Tony Fusco and James Chambers accounted for more than 2,000 yards and 16 touchdowns. The receiving duo of Nathan Nigolian and Mike Collichio are solid, and four linemen return. On defense, Mark Guarino-Hyde is back after missing seven games in 2014.

Having 16 national playoff and five Stagg Bowl appearances speaks volumes for the consistency of the **Rowan** program. Among the seven offensive starters back is running back Withler Marcelin (1,447 rushing yards, 11 scores). Linebacker Darren Dungee is exceptional, too.

Coach Mike Kelly created excitement at **Widener** last year, leading the Pride to a 12-win season. Quarterback Seth Klein (3,296 passing yards, 33 TDs) leads the offense. Safety Sean Titus intercepted nine passes last year and is back to lead the defense.

Muhlenberg set several school offensive records last year and returns nine starters. Quarterback Nick Palladino is 16-4 as a starter and passed for 2,998 yards last year. Max Cepeda will carry the running game.

The Heartland Conference has belonged to **Franklin** (Ind.) over the past five years, and the Grizzlies are favored again with 16 starters returning. Austin Carlton and three other offensive linemen return. Dylan Jenney is one of the better tight ends in D3. Linebacker Jeremiah Windell had 104 tackles last season and is back to lead the defense.

Hardin-Simmons has rebuilt its program and 16 starters are returning to the Abilene, Texas, program for 2015. Jessie Ramos can beat you at receiver or as a kick returner. On defense, safety James Place and linemen Korey Zavala and Ryne Lewis are the playmakers.

MIT is coming off of the program's best-ever season at 10-1. To duplicate that effort, the experienced defense must come through early. Linebackers Anthony Emberley and Mitch Turley could make that happen. Receiver Seve Esparrago is the top offensive threat returning.

TOP JUCO PLAYERS MOVING ON

NCAA school in italics

OFFENSE

QB	**Chad Kelly,** 6-3/220	East Mississippi / *Ole Miss*
RB	**Chris Carson,** 6-2/210	Butler, Kan. / *Oklahoma State*
RB	**Jovon Robinson,** 5-11/225	Georgia Military / *Auburn*
OL	**Zach Bateman,** 6-7/315	Orange Coast, Calif. / *UCLA*
OL	**Maurice Porter,** 6-6/300	Navarro, Texas / *Baylor*
OL	**Paris Palmer,** 6-8/300	Lackawanna, Pa. / *Penn State*
OL	**Martinas Rankin,** 6-4/300	Mississippi Gulf Coast / *Mississippi State*
OL	**DeVondre Seymour,** 6-6/310	Hinds, Miss. / *Georgia*
TE	**Raymond Epps,** 6-5/240	Arizona Western / *Arizona State*
WR	**De'Quan Hampton,** 6-4 /220	Long Beach City, Calif. / *USC*
WR	**Dede Westbrook,** 6-1/185	Blinn, Texas / *Oklahoma*

DEFENSE

DL	**Devonte Fields,** 6-4/250	Trinity Valley, Texas / *Louisville*
DL	**D.J. Jones,** 6-2/310	East Mississippi / *Ole Miss*
DL	**Marquavius Lewis ,** 6-4/275	Hutchinson, Kan. / *South Carolina*
DL	**Jonathan Taylor,** 6-4/335	Copiah-Lincoln, Miss. / *Undecided*
LB	**Davon Durant,** 6-2/240	Butler, Kan. / *Arizona State*
LB	**Traver Jung,** 6-4/220	Holmes, Miss. / *Mississippi State*
LB	**Lorenzo Phillips,** 6-3/225	East Mississippi / *Florida State*
DB	**Tony Bridges,** 6-2/185	Mississippi Gulf Coast / *Ole Miss*
DB	**Rasul Douglas,** 6-2/200	Nassau, N.Y. / *West Virginia*
DB	**Shalom Luani,** 6-1/200	CC of San Francisco / *Washington State*
DB	**Justin Martin,** 6-2/190	NE Oklahoma A&M / *Tennessee*

SPECIALISTS

K	**Ljundrim Kaba,** 6-2/180	Tyler, Texas / *Texas State*
P	**Kevin Phillips,** 6-0/190	Mississippi Gulf Coast / *Auburn*
RS	**Paul Harris,** 6-0/190	Ventura, Calif. / *Hawaii*

Lions primed to roar to third straight NJCAA title

BY TONY JIMENEZ | *JC Reports*

When East Mississippi began searching for a football coach in 2007, Pearl River was the premier junior-college team in the Magnolia State. While about 166 miles separate the two schools, they were farther apart in winning games from 2000 to 2007, with Pearl River going 64-18 and East Mississippi 21-50 during that span.

For Buddy Stephens, then an assistant coach at Pearl River, there was nowhere to go but up when he made the move from Poplarville to Scooba and East Mississippi. And Stephens, in his first head-coaching job, has brought prosperity to East Mississippi, guiding the school to three National Junior College Athletic Association championships (2011, 2013, 2014) in the last four years and a 68-10 record in seven seasons. The Lions have won 24 games in a row over the last two campaigns; this at a school that had won 34 games in 11 seasons just before Stephens arrived.

While Scooba, with a population of 730, is a small town (the nearest Walmart is 35 miles away), the program at East Mississippi is big-time. Stephens, 49, a native of Huntsville, Ala., (he has a Labrador retriever named Bama), has turned the program into, well, the Alabama of the two-year-school ranks. Twenty-four of 28 sophomores on the 2014 roster are projected to be at four-year schools this fall, including quarterback Chad Kelly (Ole Miss), offensive lineman Jamal Danley (Oklahoma) and defensive linemen D.J. Jones (Ole Miss) and Lorenzo Phillips (Florida State). LeGarrette Blount of the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots played at East Mississippi (2006-07), while teammate Malcolm Butler, the star of last year's Super Bowl for the Pats, played at Hinds CC, which speaks well for the 14 football-playing jucos in Mississippi.

1. East Mississippi (12-0 in 2014)

The Lions have passed the test of time and should pick up where they left off last season. Don't be fooled by the fact there are only six returning starters: 5-11, 190-pound running back D.J. Law; 6-4, 300-pound offensive lineman James Davis; 6-1, 190-pound wide receiver Allenzae Staggers; 6-3, 260-pound defensive lineman Caleb Grant; 6-3, 245-pound defensive lineman DeShawn Tillman and 5-11, 190-pound defensive back Jalen Boney. Buddy Stephens' team didn't just beat opponents a year ago, it destroyed them; the Lions posted five shutouts in a row while scoring between 49 and 65 points, and they won five other games by between 36 and 76 points.

Chad Kelly has moved on to Ole Miss, but East Mississippi is poised for another dominant season.

2. Mt. San Antonio (Calif.) (11-2)

The West Coast's JC version of the New England Patriots–i.e., always loaded, always winning–will be solid gold. The California state champion of last season has 10 returning starters (five on offense, five on defense) and quality complementary players. The best Mounties should be three returning All-Americans: 6-2, 235-pound linebacker Sitiveni Tamaivena, 6-5, 300-pound offensive tackle Joe Kupcikevicius and 6-1, 255-pound defensive end Norman Moimoi. Mt. San Antonio has three California juco titles and three runner-up finishes in coach Bob Jastrab's 10 years in Walnut, and is 68-8 the past six seasons.

3. Trinity Valley (Texas) (12-0)

Trinity Valley put up an astounding

KELLY A. JOHNSON/AP

7,778 yards of offense in 2014. Expect more of the same this season. Offensively, tackles George Roberts (6-7, 320 pounds) and T.J. Henson (6-5, 320) and center Rex Printz (6-3, 285) are solid up front, while QB Jerod Evans (6-4, 230) has good returning receivers in Alex Pina-Rhoden, Emmanuel Harris and Andre Wilson in addition to transfers Derrick Willies (6-4, 210, ex-Iowa) and Nick Jones, a 6-4, 255-pound tight end via Louisiana-Monroe. The defense will be led by noseguard J.T. Williams (6-2, 295), end Ugonna Nwarie, linebacker Mar'Quaveon Jones and All-America free safety Jamal Jones (62 tackles last season). Placekicker Leo Peralta (NJCAA-best 128 points for kickers, 95-of-96 PATs last year) is automatic.

4. Iowa Western (11-1)

Last season the Reivers, in their second NJCAA Championship Game appearance in three years, lost to powerful East Mississippi 34-17. A stout defense that yielded only 14 points per game was the big reason for getting that far. Eight returning starters–four on offense, four on defense–should help produce another winning season. The top-of-the-line players include explosive wide receiver Taj Williams (6-3, 185 pounds), well-rounded receiver/running back Tyus Mason (5-9, 185), dominant defensive tackle Merrick Jackson (6-3, 315) and shifty cornerback Rico Gaffard (5-10, 190).

5. Hutchinson (Kan.) (11-1)

Star running back Alvin Kamara has taken his act to the University of Tennessee after one season, but the beat goes on for the Blue Dragons. Six starters are back but Hutchinson received a big shot in the arm with the return of coach Rion Rhoades, one of the best JC mentors in the country. All-America running back Travis Custis should "play big" thanks in part to star offensive tackle Tate Leavitt (6-6, 315 pounds). Also expect good play from quarterbacks Kylen Blinn (a part-time starter a year ago), Dimonic Roden-McKinzy (a transfer from the University of Minnesota) and Ethan Loeder (6-2, 205). The defense will have redshirts and transfers carrying most of the load.

6. City College of San Francisco (11-2)

After 38 years and a 326-38 record, George Rush has retired, but ex-Ram Jimmy Collins, the QB coach for CCSF last year, should keep this team winning as the new head coach. Collins' best player is 6-2, 290-pound center A.J. McCollum, who anchored an offensive line last season that included three BCS transfers. McCollum graded highest among all of

SUPER SOPHOMORES

OFFENSE	POS	HT/WT	JUNIOR COLLEGE
Trent Hosick	QB	6-2/225	Arizona Western
Travis Custis	RB	6-2/228	Hutchinson, Kan.
Justin Crawford	RB	6-0/190	Northwest Mississippi
Akeem Cooperwood	OL	6-7/325	Georgia Military
Joe Kupcikevicius	OL	6-5/300	Mt. San Antonio, Calif.
Lio Lafaele	OL	6-4/300	Riverside City, Calif.
A.J. McCollum	OL	6-2/290	City College of San Francisco
George Roberts	OL	6-7/320	Trinity Valley, Texas
Steely Smith	TE	6-4/260	Butte, Calif.
Zimari Manning	WR	6-2/200	Golden West, Calif.
Taj Williams	WR	6-3/185	Iowa Western
DEFENSE	**POS**	**HT/WT**	**JUNIOR COLLEGE**
David Fangupo	DL	6-2/320	Cerritos, Calif.
Norman Moimoi	DL	6-1/255	Mt. San Antonio, Calif.
Dequinton Osborne	DL	6-0/285	Kilgore, Texas
Tralund Webber	DL	6-5/250	Blinn, Texas
Kalil Gray	LB	6-0/225	Georgia Military
AJ Hotchkins	LB	5-11/235	Riverside City, Calif.
Sitiveni Tamaivena	LB	6-2/235	Mt. San Antonio, Calif.
Maurice Chandler	DB	6-1/200	Northeastern Oklahoma A&M
Jamal Jones	DB	5-11/195	Trinity Valley, Texas
Jamarcus King	DB	6-3/180	Coffeyville, Kans.
Robert Sanders	DB	5-8/180	American River, Calif.
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT/WT**	**JUNIOR COLLEGE**
Leo Peralta	K	5-9/180	Trinity Valley, Texas
Corey Bojorquez	P	6-2/215	Cerritos, Calif.
Derrick Vickers	RS	5-11/170	Bakersfield, Calif.

them as a freshman and is one of seven offensive starters back. Other starters of note include 5-11, 200-pound running back Elijah Dale (5.8 yards per carry last season) and 6-5, 315-pound offensive lineman Oge Udeougu. The defense will be led by 6-3, 235-pound linebacker Nick Pierotti. All hope to get CCSF back to the California juco title game, which it lost to Mt. San Antonio, 27-17, in 2014.

7. Arizona Western (11-1)

With nine starters returning on offense, expect the Matadors to get out of the gates fast. Most notable are redshirt All-America QB Trent Hosick, 6-1, 225-pound running back Darrell Monroe and 6-6, 290-pound offensive tackle Deontay Estes. Hosick is wavering on returning, however, and, if he is not back, Tempe, Ariz., freshman Emanuel Gant (6-3, 230 pounds) is a dandy. He's the only QB in Arizona prep history to pass for more than 10,000 yards in his career. Defensively, Western has a quartet of above-average linebackers: David Luafatasaga (6-4, 225 pounds), William Johnson (6-3, 225) Tommy Fisher (6-0, 220) and Jonquavis Miller (6-1, 230).

8. Riverside City (Calif.) (10-2)

Last season Mt. San Antonio snapped a 30-game Riverside home-field winning streak (35-14) that began in 2010. With a handful of starters returning–four offensive and one defensive (All-America linebacker AJ Hotchkins)–the Tigers are primed. Riverside City has a strong offensive line highlighted by All-America tackle Lio Lafaele (6-4, 300 pounds) and guard Dwayne Wallace (6-5, 310). Several talented transfers should be key contributors, including defensive backs Ron Robinson (ex-UCLA), Trevor Hodge (Iowa State) and Aaron Washington (Saddleback JC).

9. Nassau (N.Y.) (10-0)

Power juco teams in the Eastern U.S. are sparse, but Nassau is superbly talented. Quarterback Ben Holmes tops seven returning offensive starters (four on the line), led by 6-7, 290-pound tackle Malcolm Pridgeon, from a unit that averaged 36 points a year ago. The defense–it yielded an average of 14.4 points a game, fourth among NJCAA schools in 2014–also has seven returning starters, headlined by linebacker Walter Cooper (6-0, 235 pounds) and end Ali-Ali Musa (6-2, 265). The entire line that dominated run-oriented teams is back. Nassau will get a good gauge of where it stands quickly, playing third-ranked Trinity Valley in the Juco Kickoff Classic Aug. 22.

10. Coffeyville, Kan. (9-3)

The Red Ravens have been revitalized under fourth-year coach Aaron Flores. Flores has an inflammatory lung disease and periodically uses an oxygen tank, but it hasn't stopped him from recruiting well and leading the Coffeyville program to success. This year he has eight returning starters and a very promising incoming recruiting class led by University of Tennessee transfer quarterback Riley Ferguson. Standout returnees include 6-4, 320-pound offensive lineman Branton Autry and 6-3, 180-pound juco All-America cornerback Jamarcus King.

REST OF THE BEST

- **11. Tyler (Texas)**, 8-3
- **12. San Mateo (Calif.)**, 9-2
- **13. Blinn (Texas)**, 4-4
- **14. Snow (Utah)**, 8-2
- **15. Cerritos (Calif.)**, 8-3
- **16. Butler (Kan.)**, 8-3
- **17. American River (Calif.)**, 10-2
- **18. Mississippi Gulf Coast**, 8-2
- **19. Long Beach City (Calif.)**, 9-2
- **20. Copiah-Lincoln (Miss.)**, 8-3
- **21. Butte (Calif.)**, 7-4
- **22. Saddleback (Calif.)**, 5-5
- **23. Scottsdale (Ariz.)**, 8-3
- **24. Fullerton (Calif.)**, 8-3
- **25 (tie). Georgia Military**, 6-4
- **25 (tie). Ventura (Calif.)**, 6-5

Derek Fulton

NAIA PRESEASON TOP 10

1. Morningside (Iowa)
2. Marian (Ind.)
3. Carroll (Mont.)
4. Grand View (Iowa)
5. Saint Xavier (Ill.)
6. Southern Oregon
7. MidAmerica Nazarene (Kan.)
8. Northwestern (Iowa)
9. Faulkner (Ala.)
10. Baker (Kan.)

NAIA ALL-AMERICA TEAM

OFFENSE

QB	**Derek Fulton**, Grand View (Iowa), Sr.
RB	**Jarrell Reynolds**, Southeastern (Fla.), So.
RB	**Jace Billingsley**, Eastern Oregon, Sr.
OL	**Zach Mitchell**, Marian (Ind.), Sr.
OL	**Kevin Lonergan**, Saint Xavier (Ill.), Jr.
OL	**Blake Frank**, Morningside (Iowa), Jr.
OL	**Max Proudfit**, Southern Oregon, Sr.
OL	**Hea Tuifua**, William Penn (Iowa), Sr.
TE	**Levi Ettleman**, Northwestern (Iowa), Sr.
WR	**Andre McCullough**, Rocky Mtn. (Mont.), Sr.
WR	**Antoine Griffin**, Valley City State (N.D.), So.

DEFENSE

DL	**David Meis**, Montana Tech, Sr.
DL	**Luke Gibbs**, Morningside (Iowa), Jr.
DL	**Nick Cemeno**, Saint Xavier (Ill.), Sr.
DL	**Cole Potter**, Dakota State (S.D.), Jr.
LB	**Beau Shields**, Marian (Ind.), Sr.
LB	**Jarelle Miller**, Jamestown (N.D.), Sr.
LB	**Zac Schleuger**, Morningside (Iowa), Sr.
DB	**Justin Wohlert**, Northwestern (Iowa), Sr.
DB	**Eric Price**, Marian (Ind.), Jr.
DB	**Adam Sauder**, Taylor (Ind.), Sr.
DB	**James Dowgin**, Carroll (Mont.), Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	**Cristian Casillas**, MidAmer. Nazarene (Kan.), So.
P	**David Strickland**, Point (Ga.), Sr.

Morningside heads host of championship challengers

BY WILL LONG | *Assistant Editor*

For the fourth straight season, the NAIA had a first-time champion as the Southern Oregon Raiders knocked off the Marian (Ind.) Knights to win the 59th annual NAIA football title. The Raiders may be hard-pressed to defend their championship with the graduation of Rawlings-NAIA National Football Player of the Year Austin Dodge in addition to three other All-Americans. Morningside (Iowa), Marian (Ind.), Carroll (Mont.) and Grand View (Iowa) will look to challenge for the national title in what should be an entertaining 2015 season.

Coach Steve Ryan's **Morningside (Iowa)** Mustangs averaged 662.2 yards per game in 2014 and nine starters return to the offense. Quarterback Ryan Kasdorf, who led the NAIA in pass efficiency (189.2), will pilot an offense that set five national records last season, including most yards in a game (916), yards per game (662.2) and scoring (55.5 ppg). The Mustangs must find a replacement for running back Brandon Wegher, who rushed for an NAIA record 2,610 yards and accounted for 43 touchdowns.

The **Marian (Ind.)** Knights rode departed running back Tevin Lake to the national title game before falling to Southern Oregon. Lake, a two-time All-American, carried the ball 390 times for coach Mark Henninger's team last season, and the Knights may look to air it out more in 2015. Quarterback Hayden Northern (2,945 yards, 22 TDs) returns along with his top four wide receivers, but he must cut down on the 20 interceptions thrown last season.

Carroll (Mont.) lost two games last season, both coming to eventual national champion Southern Oregon by a combined six points. Coach Mike Van Diest will have a veteran leader in senior quarterback Mac Roche (2,942 yards, 28 TDs, 4 INTs), who may be asked to carry even more of the load with the graduation of Dustin Rinker (1,675 yards, 22 TDs), the all-time leading rusher in school history.

Fifteen starters, including *Sporting News Yearbooks* preseason All-America selection Derek Fulton at quarterback, return for **Grand View (Iowa)**. Vikings coach Mike Woodley must replace receiver Brady Roland (62 receptions, 1,167 yards, 11 TDs), but Fulton will be the center of attention after passing for 2,581 yards and rushing for an additional 836 yards while accounting for 32 total touchdowns.

Coach Mike Feminis returns nine starters from an offense that averaged 456.8 yards per game for **Saint Xavier (Ill.)**. Quarterback John Rhode (3,609 yards, 31 TDs) has two solid weapons in receivers Stephen Simms and Randall Wells, who combined to catch 143 passes for 1,898 yards and 18 touchdowns.

No team has more to replace than defending national champion **Southern Oregon**, who loses four All-Americans. The Raiders led the nation in passing offense (383.0 ypg) for the third consecutive season, but quarterback Austin Dodge (5,607 yards, 52 touchdowns) and receivers Ryan Retzlaff and Dylan Young (combined 195 receptions, 3,298 yards, 34 TDs) have graduated. Coach Craig Howard may try to balance the offense more this season with the return of running backs Sean Tow (754 yards, 7 TDs) and Keegan Lawrence (519, 4).

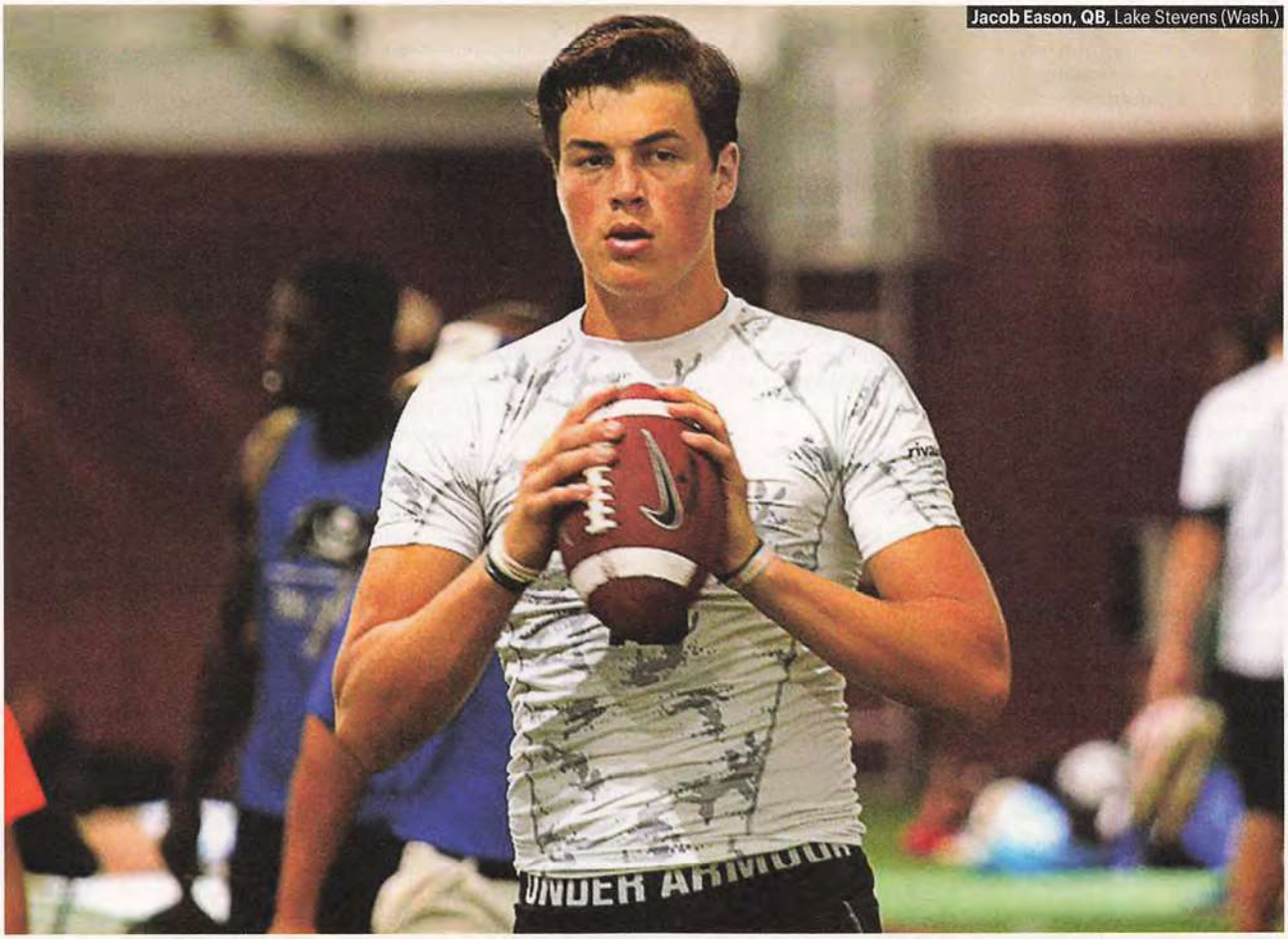
Eight starters return on defense for **MidAmerica Nazarene (Kan.)**, led by leading tackler Luke Elam (67 stops). The Pioneers allowed just 294.8 yards and 18.2 points per game for coach Brian Willmer, who is poised to contend for the HAAC behind running back Javon Taylor (1,263 yards, 6.1 ypc, 15 TDs).

Northwestern (Iowa) coach Kyle Achterhoff returns eight starters from the nation's stingiest defense (247.5 ypg, 15.2 ppg). Defensive back Justin Wohlert led the country with 10 interceptions, while defensive end Sam Van Ginkel leads the GPAC in sacks over the last two seasons.

A top-10 mainstay over the last two seasons, **Faulkner (Ala.)** must find a replacement for quarterback Terrell Robinson (2,864 yards, 26 TDs), but the Eagles new quarterback should benefit from the return of five players who caught at least 20 passes each last season.

Baker (Kan.) coach Mike Grossner returns eight starters from one of the nation's best defenses, led by linebackers Keith Loneker Jr. and Tucker Pauley and lineman Josh Kock.

FULTON: JOHN BAZEMORE / AP



Jacob Eason, QB, Lake Stevens (Wash.)

The sunshine boys

Four Floridians set the tone in our annual rundown of the country's best high school seniors.

BY JC SHURBURTT | *247Sports*

The Class of 2016 *Sporting News Yearbooks* All-America Team is selected by a combination of on-field high school performance and projection as a high school prospect.

This year's team features selections from 12 different states, led by four from the state of Florida and three each from Texas and California.

Several of these prospects have already verbally committed to various college programs.

Please note that rankings and recruiting information are at press time and are subject to change as the cycle moves forward.

OFFENSE

QB: JACOB EASON
Lake Stevens (Wash.)

Eason threw for 2,829 yards and 32 touchdowns with only three interceptions during his junior season. The 6-5, 200-pounder is the top-ranked pro-style quarterback prospect in the 2016 class per the 247Sports composite rankings. Eason's father, Tony Eason (not to be confused with the former NFL quarterback of the same name), played college football at Notre Dame, but his son committed early to Georgia. Longtime observers of the Bulldogs' program believe he will be the strongest-armed quarterback at UGA since Matthew Stafford.

RB: KAREEM WALKER
Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic

The 6-1, 210-pound Walker has rushed for nearly 2,800 yards the past two seasons, including a 1,607-yard, 26-touchdown showing as a junior. Walker is the No. 1 running back in the Class

EASON: PHOTO COURTESY OF 247SPORTS

of 2016 per the 247Sports Composite rankings and was at the top of the recruiting board for various major programs prior to his verbal commitment to Ohio State. That happened Jan. 12, the night the Buckeyes claimed the BCS national championship with their win over Oregon.

RB: TAVIEN FEASTER
Spartanburg (S.C.)

Following in the tradition of former South Carolina star Marcus Lattimore and Georgia great Stephen Davis, Feaster is the next elite running back to hail from the upstate of South Carolina. The 6-0, 180-pounder has torched opposing defenses the last two seasons, combining for 2,582 yards and 30 touchdowns during that time. Feaster is the No. 2 running back in the Class of 2016 per the 247Sports Composite rankings and gave an early commitment to Clemson on National Signing Day in February.

WR: TREN'DAVIAN DICKSON
Navasota (Texas)

Dickson lit up defenses in 2014, catching 90 passes for 2,163 yards and 39 touchdowns—unheard of stats for a high school player, even in pass-happy Texas. Dickson, whose junior film is must-see video, was named MaxPreps' National Junior of the Year for his efforts. The 6-0, 171-pounder was at one point committed to Baylor, but now Texas A&M (which is right down the road), Alabama and Texas, along with the Bears, are in the mix to land the U.S. Army All-American.

WR: TYLER VAUGHNS
La Puente (Calif.) Bishop Amat

Vaughns set opposing secondaries ablaze in 2014, catching 83 passes for 1,578 yards. The 6-3, 175-pounder is the complete package—size, speed, route-running, hands. Southern Cal is the favorite to land Vaughns, but UCLA, Washington and a host of others have offered and are in

Kareem Walker, RB, Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic

the mix. Vaughns currently is the No. 2 wide receiver in the Class of 2016 per the 247Sports Composite rankings and was an All-State selection as a junior.

OL: GREGORY LITTLE
Allen (Texas)

The 6-6, 305-pound Little was a consensus Class 6A All-State selection in 2014, helping Allen go 16-0 and capture a state championship. Little has excellent size, feet and a great frame to become an elite offensive tackle at the collegiate level. He's the consensus No. 1 offensive tackle in the 2016 recruiting class per the 247Sports Composite rankings and was an early commit to Texas A&M, where his high school teammate, quarterback Kyler Murray, signed during the 2015 cycle.

OL: TOMMY KRAEMER
Cincinnati Elder

The 6-5, 305-pound Kraemer was a second-team All-USA selection by *USA Today* as a junior and offers one of the best combinations of physicality and athleticism among the offensive linemen in the 2016 class. He currently is ranked as the top overall prospect in the state of Ohio per the 247Sports Composite rankings and the No. 3 offensive tackle nationally. Kraemer has accepted an invitation to the 2016 U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

OL: BEN BREDESON
Hartland (Wisc.) Arrowhead

Bredeson is the next great offensive lineman from the state of Wisconsin. The 6-5, 280-pounder is the No. 1 prospect in the Badger State per the 247Sports Composite rankings for 2016 and was a first-team MaxPreps Junior All-American last season. He has played on back-to-back state championship teams and has a host of scholarship offers, including Michigan, Ohio State, Notre Dame and the in-state Badgers, who have made a living off in-state offensive linemen in recent seasons.

OL: BEN CLEVELAND
Toccoa (Ga.) Stephens County

Cleveland is what you call a "freak." The 6-7, 322-pounder doesn't move around like someone of his size should in high school. He looks just as natural running a 100-meter dash on the track as he does blocking a defensive end into oblivion in a high school football game. He has been electronically timed at 5.11 seconds in the 40-yard dash and 4.97 in the short shuttle (blistering times for a player this age and size). Want an example of his athletic versatility? Look no further than last football season when Cleveland played defensive end for his prep team. Cleveland, who is committed to Georgia, is the No. 5 offensive tackle nationally per the 247Sports Composite rankings and a U.S. Army All-American.

OL: WILLIE ALLEN
New Orleans John Curtis

The 6-7, 305-pound Allen helped lead his team to a state championship game in 2014 and was named a Junior All-American by MaxPreps. He also was an All-District selection in the New Orleans metro area. Nearly the entire country has offered Allen, who's the No. 4 offensive tackle in 2016 per the 247Sports Composite rankings. His recruitment is expected to come down to in-state LSU or Alabama.

TE: ISSAC NAUTA
Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy

Since his freshman season at Buford (Ga.) High, Nauta has been a coveted Division 1 prospect. The 6-4, 237-pounder has been a star both ways for the Wolves and recently transferred to IMG Academy to finish out his prep playing career. Nauta is the No. 1 tight end in the 2016 cycle per the 247Sports Composite rankings and is currently committed to Florida State.

ATH: SCOTT BRACEY
Richmond (Va.) Benedictine

Bracey transitioned from receiver to quarterback last season for the Cadets and racked up more than 1,800 yards rushing, passing and receiving, earning Player-of-the-Year honors from the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. The 6-3, 185-pound dynamic athlete could play quarterback or receiver at Duke, where he is verbally committed. This was one of the biggest recruiting gets in Blue Devils football history, as Bracey picked Duke over Ohio State and Florida State. Bracey is as fast as he is tall, having been timed at sub-4.5 seconds in the 40-yard dash.

DEFENSE

DL: BRELAND BRANDT
Los Angeles Winward School

The 6-4, 220-pound Brandt is a versatile defensive prospect who could play end or linebacker in college. The U.S. Army All-American Bowl selection has a quick first step and outstanding athleticism (he also plays basketball at the high school level). Brandt is the No. 3 weakside defensive end for 2016 per the 247Sports Composite rankings and is committed to UCLA.

DL: NICK BOSA
Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas

Bosa is the younger brother of Ohio State All-American Joey Bosa and some say that the 6-3, 250-pounder is better at this stage than his older brother was. Bosa was a MaxPreps Junior All-American and finished with a staggering 29.5 tackles for loss at south Florida power St. Thomas Aquinas last year. He has offers from nearly

WWALKER PHOTO COURTESY OF 247SPORTS

Lyndell "Mack" Wilson, LB, Montgomery (Ala.) Carver

WILSON: PHOTO COURTESY OF 247SPORTS

every school in the country, but all signs point toward him following in the footsteps of his brother and heading to Columbus.

DL: RASHAN GARY
Paramus (N.J.) Catholic

As of April, Gary was the No. 1 overall prospect in the 2016 recruiting cycle per the 247Sports Composite rankings. The 6-4, 290-pounder is athletically gifted and advanced for his age and was named the Area Defensive Player of the Year by *The Star-Ledger* of Newark, N.J., after racking up 55 tackles and 10 sacks in leading Paramus to the league title game. Gary has a host of offers, including Alabama, Michigan and Ohio State.

DL: SHAVAR MANUEL
Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy

Manuel, who transferred to IMG after posting 61 tackles and 20 sacks for Blake High in Tampa last season, is a big, physical and athletic defensive end/tackle. At 6-4 and 260 pounds, Manuel is a matchup nightmare inside or outside for opposing offenses. Every major program in the country has offered Manuel, who is expected to end up at Florida State when all is said and done.

LB: LYNDELL "MACK" WILSON
Montgomery (Ala.) Carver

The 6-3, 230-pound Wilson was named first-team Class 6A All-State last season while rolling up more than 75 total tackles. The nation's No. 9 overall prospect per the 247Sports Composite rankings, Wilson has offers from nearly every program that recruits the Southeast. He's expected to end up at Alabama or Auburn.

LB: CALEB KELLY
Fresno (Calif.) Clovis East

Kelly is the latest star prospect from the Fresno area and displayed his versatility last season on offense (where he was valued as a receiver) and defense (where he posted a 20-tackle game). The 6-3, 215-pound Kelly is one of the most coveted prospects on the West Coast for the 2016 cycle and ranks as the nation's No. 3 outside linebacker per the 247Sports Composite rankings. Oklahoma appears to have the early edge over USC, Alabama, Florida State, Michigan and a host of additional suitors.

Nick Bosa, DL, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas

LB: BEN DAVIS
Gordo (Ala.) Gordo School

Davis is a 6-4, 230-pound monster athlete who is currently the No. 4 outside linebacker nationally in the 2016 cycle per the 247Sports Composite rankings. He was a Class 3A All-State selection last season and has football in his blood. Davis' father, Wayne Davis, is the all-time leading tackler at the University of Alabama and his son is expected to follow in his footsteps to Tuscaloosa, though several programs—Auburn, Georgia, LSU, USC and others—are trying to convince him otherwise.

DB: SAIVION SMITH
Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy

Smith, the No. 1 cornerback in the 2016 cycle per the 247Sports Composite rankings, had 67 tackles, five interceptions and three blocked punts last season at IMG, and also scored six combined defensive and special-teams touchdowns. The 6-1, 175-pounder made a somewhat surprising commitment to LSU (it was thought he was a Florida State lean) on Feb. 24. Nearly every school in the country had offered him. Size, ball skills, speed and natural instincts make him elite.

DB: LEVONTA TAYLOR
Virginia Beach (Va.) Ocean Lakes

Taylor, who has been on the recruiting radar since he was an eighth-grader, broke up 13 passes and had 40 tackles in earning All-Tidewater honors last season for top Virginia talent producer Ocean Lakes. Taylor is the No. 2 cornerback prospect nationally in the 2016 cycle per the 247Sports Composite rankings and committed to Florida State over offers from Virginia and others in the spring.

DB: KRISTIAN FULTON
Metairie (La.) Archbishop Rummel

Fulton was named the Defensive Player of the Year by the *Times-Picayune* of New Orleans after intercepting 11 passes during his junior season. The 6-0, 165-pounder has a host of scholarship offers, including in-state LSU, where he is expected to ultimately end up.

DB: DEONTAY ANDERSON
Manvel (Texas)

Anderson has posted nearly 200 tackles (181 to be exact) the last three seasons and in 2014 added two interceptions. The 6-1, 182-pound Anderson is the No. 3 safety prospect nationally per the 247Sports Composite rankings for the 2016 cycle and has the size, speed and ball skills to be elite in college. Texas A&M, LSU and Alabama are among his scholarship offers, with the Aggies and Tigers expected to battle it out for his services.

ATH: MARQUEZ CALLAWAY
Warner-Robins (Ga.)

Callaway defines the position "athlete." The 6-3, 175-pounder is expected to make his mark on defense (he projects as a big cornerback) and he has posted eight interceptions during his varsity career. He also plays offense and three different positions for his high school basketball team. Georgia, Alabama and a host of other programs have offered the U.S. Army All-American, but the Bulldogs are the current favorite to land him.

BOSA: PHOTO COURTESY OF 247SPORTS

2014 D1 Standings

FBS

AMERICAN ATHLETIC

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Memphis	7	1	279	122	10	3	471	253
Cincinnati	7	1	274	158	9	4	442	354
UCF	7	1	232	120	9	4	365	249
East Carolina	5	3	273	206	8	5	466	336
Houston	5	3	226	160	8	5	387	268
Temple	4	4	144	142	6	6	277	210
South Florida	3	5	126	193	4	8	206	324
Tulane	2	6	117	205	3	9	192	341
Tulsa	2	6	217	290	2	10	296	471
Connecticut	1	7	115	234	2	10	186	358
SMU	1	7	121	294	1	11	133	496

ACC

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
ATLANTIC								
Florida State	8	0	286	175	13	1	472	358
Clemson	6	2	204	142	10	3	401	217
Louisville	5	3	216	154	9	4	405	283
Boston College	4	4	183	174	7	6	341	277
N.C. State	3	5	197	250	8	5	392	351
Syracuse	1	7	103	198	3	9	205	292
Wake Forest	1	7	97	236	3	9	178	317
COASTAL								
Georgia Tech	6	2	298	187	11	3	530	360
Duke	5	3	216	201	9	4	421	283
North Carolina	4	4	240	291	6	7	432	507
Pittsburgh	4	4	246	237	6	7	414	342
Virginia Tech	3	5	155	170	7	6	313	262
Miami (Fla.)	3	5	191	190	6	7	380	316
Virginia	3	5	167	194	5	7	310	289

BIG TEN

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
EAST								
Ohio State	8	0	358	195	14	1	672	330
Michigan State	7	1	316	158	11	2	559	280
Maryland	4	4	202	263	7	6	370	392
Rutgers	3	5	166	278	8	5	347	392
Michigan	3	5	155	188	5	7	251	269
Penn State	2	6	112	165	7	6	268	242
Indiana	1	7	151	288	4	8	301	394
WEST								
Wisconsin	7	1	294	143	11	3	484	291
Nebraska	5	3	267	217	9	4	491	343
Minnesota	5	3	244	200	8	5	369	314
Iowa	4	4	250	212	7	6	367	333
Illinois	3	5	188	277	6	7	337	442
Northwestern	3	5	170	201	5	7	276	302
Purdue	1	7	177	265	3	9	286	380

BIG 12

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
TCU	8	1	428	223	12	1	562	244
Baylor	8	1	408	263	11	2	586	290
Kansas State	7	2	303	197	9	4	430	261
Oklahoma	5	4	333	264	8	5	467	297
West Virginia	5	4	281	244	7	6	398	314
Texas	5	4	209	211	6	7	271	279
Oklahoma State	4	5	215	311	7	6	329	384
Texas Tech	2	7	266	385	4	8	366	495
Kansas	1	8	153	320	3	9	214	399
Iowa State	0	9	207	385	2	10	278	466

CONFERENCE USA

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
EAST								
Marshall	7	1	378	183	13	1	638	294
Middle Tennessee	5	3	270	273	6	6	379	378
UAB	4	4	258	243	6	6	398	359
Western Kentucky	4	4	347	347	8	5	577	519
Old Dominion	4	4	272	337	6	6	392	456
Florida International	3	5	202	205	4	8	276	298
Florida Atlantic	2	6	212	276	3	9	288	413
WEST								
Louisiana Tech	7	1	357	159	9	5	523	346
Rice	5	3	248	243	8	5	374	370
UTEP	5	3	213	208	7	6	346	365
UTSA	3	5	133	214	4	8	205	311
North Texas	2	6	175	262	4	8	326	358
Southern Miss	1	7	169	284	3	9	228	425

MID-AMERICAN

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
EAST								
Bowling Green	5	3	229	214	8	6	420	469
Ohio	4	4	159	191	6	6	246	298
Buffalo	3	4	221	202	5	6	355	347
Akron	3	5	189	198	5	7	271	277
Massachusetts	3	5	245	243	3	9	328	396
Miami (Ohio)	2	6	197	258	2	10	268	382
Kent State	1	6	115	168	2	9	180	319
WEST								
Northern Illinois	7	1	227	186	11	3	441	359
Toledo	7	1	271	188	9	4	476	396
Western Michigan	6	2	274	161	8	5	439	324
Central Michigan	5	3	231	181	7	6	350	327
Ball State	4	4	245	239	5	7	332	326
Eastern Michigan	1	7	134	308	2	10	182	491

MOUNTAIN WEST

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
MOUNTAIN								
Boise State	7	1	350	236	12	2	556	375
Colorado State	6	2	285	205	10	3	441	326
Utah State	6	2	224	147	10	4	377	276
Air Force	5	3	226	209	10	3	409	314
New Mexico	2	6	226	298	4	8	332	431
Wyoming	2	6	188	259	4	8	253	394
WEST								
Fresno State	5	3	236	214	6	8	371	454
San Diego State	5	3	202	154	7	6	325	258
Nevada	4	4	254	236	7	6	379	354
Hawaii	3	5	173	221	4	9	272	349
San Jose State	2	6	139	219	3	9	232	353
UNLV	1	7	188	293	2	11	285	500

PAC-12

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
NORTH								
Oregon	8	1	395	225	13	2	681	354
Stanford	5	4	214	175	8	5	353	213
Washington	4	5	236	216	8	6	423	347
California	3	6	338	397	5	7	459	477
Oregon State	2	7	213	328	5	7	308	379
Washington State	2	7	272	377	3	9	382	463
SOUTH								
Arizona	7	2	321	242	10	4	483	395
Arizona State	6	3	286	264	10	3	480	363
UCLA	6	3	305	258	10	3	435	365
USC	6	3	289	221	9	4	466	327
Utah	5	4	221	263	9	4	407	324
Colorado	0	9	263	387	2	10	342	468

SEC

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
EAST								
Missouri	7	1	191	153	11	3	389	295
Georgia	6	2	310	195	10	3	537	269
Florida	4	4	199	206	7	5	363	253
Tennessee	3	5	204	217	7	6	376	315
South Carolina	3	5	272	294	7	6	424	395
Kentucky	2	6	183	300	5	7	350	375
Vanderbilt	0	8	102	283	3	9	206	399
WEST								
Alabama	7	1	266	154	12	2	517	258
Mississippi State	6	2	270	180	10	3	480	282
Ole Miss	5	3	202	135	9	4	368	208
Auburn	4	4	275	262	8	5	461	347
LSU	4	4	153	166	8	5	359	228
Texas A&M	3	5	223	293	8	5	458	365
Arkansas	2	6	165	177	7	6	415	250

SUN BELT

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Georgia Southern	8	0	306	154	9	3	469	281
Louisiana	7	1	278	191	9	4	383	338
Appalachian State	6	2	280	200	7	5	428	328
Texas State	5	3	248	221	7	5	406	332
Arkansas State	5	3	336	234	7	6	477	396
South Alabama	5	3	187	183	6	7	293	343
Louisiana-Monroe	3	5	194	205	4	8	241	315
Troy	3	5	200	248	3	9	262	434
New Mexico State	1	7	200	316	2	10	294	469
Idaho	1	7	197	294	1	10	275	410
Georgia State	0	8	182	362	1	11	272	520

FCS

BIG SKY

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Eastern Washington	7	1	334	206	11	3	618	439
Idaho State	6	2	345	233	8	4	484	377
Montana	6	2	245	170	9	5	415	294
Montana State	6	2	295	254	8	5	496	433
Cal Poly	5	3	302	254	7	5	406	343
Northern Arizona	5	3	198	198	7	5	315	308
Sacramento State	4	4	294	320	7	5	458	433
North Dakota	3	5	152	218	5	7	191	314
Southern Utah	3	5	223	276	3	9	278	427
Northern Colorado	2	6	167	258	3	8	214	337
Portland State	2	6	196	240	3	9	290	408
Weber State	2	6	190	222	2	10	262	368
UC Davis	1	7	213	305	2	9	286	416

BIG SOUTH

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Liberty	4	1	147	83	9	5	448	373
Coastal Carolina	4	1	187	100	12	2	522	274
Presbyterian	3	2	74	90	6	5	175	270
Charleston Southern	3	2	134	100	8	4	341	264
Monmouth	1	4	88	146	6	5	322	282
Gardner-Webb	0	5	50	161	4	8	225	335

COLONIAL

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
New Hampshire	8	0	290	127	12	2	504	297
Villanova	7	1	303	186	11	3	528	310
James Madison	6	2	319	209	9	4	464	377
Richmond	5	3	218	184	9	5	435	355
Delaware	4	4	199	221	6	6	261	327
William & Mary	4	4	190	191	7	5	303	272
Stony Brook	4	4	170	136	5	7	216	184
Maine	4	4	150	175	5	6	180	234
Albany	3	5	223	244	7	5	322	281
Towson	2	6	114	231	4	8	193	343
Rhode Island	1	7	109	249	1	11	150	409
Elon	0	8	121	253	1	11	169	366

IVY LEAGUE

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Harvard	7	0	228	88	10	0	327	123
Dartmouth	6	1	235	112	8	2	313	210
Yale	5	2	263	182	8	2	411	299
Princeton	4	3	172	200	5	5	287	287
Brown	3	4	197	174	5	5	247	228
Pennsylvania	2	5	153	184	2	8	213	319
Cornell	1	6	126	258	1	9	159	336
Columbia	0	7	61	237	0	10	103	389

MEAC

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Bethune-Cookman	6	2	238	143	9	3	329	252
Morgan State	6	2	228	187	7	6	362	344
North Carolina A&T	6	2	235	111	9	3	388	167
North Carolina Central	6	2	244	167	7	5	333	297
South Carolina State	6	2	229	140	8	4	319	250
Norfolk State	4	4	113	119	4	8	140	211
Florida A&M	3	5	170	177	3	9	204	315
Howard	3	5	217	243	5	7	305	364
Delaware State	2	6	99	230	2	10	136	389
Hampton	2	6	177	219	3	9	270	374
Savannah State	0	8	93	307	0	12	137	557

MISSOURI VALLEY

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
North Dakota State	7	1	259	108	15	1	527	225
Illinois State	7	1	275	187	13	2	574	322
Northern Iowa	6	2	244	156	9	5	452	279
South Dakota State	5	3	245	223	9	5	445	355
Youngstown State	4	4	181	195	7	5	328	282
Indiana State	4	4	180	207	8	6	354	339
Southern Illinois	3	5	207	238	6	6	353	317
Western Illinois	3	5	206	247	5	7	299	327
Missouri State	1	7	147	214	4	8	275	312
South Dakota	0	8	131	300	2	10	233	427

NORTHEAST

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Sacred Heart	5	1	174	104	9	2	303	182
Wagner	5	1	139	105	7	4	228	198
Bryant	4	2	162	93	8	3	283	177
St. Francis (Pa.)	3	3	179	160	5	6	354	315
Duquesne	2	4	116	112	6	6	317	258
Central Conn. State	1	5	106	158	3	9	232	301
Robert Morris	1	5	56	200	1	10	109	377

OHIO VALLEY

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Jacksonville State	8	0	318	121	10	2	422	260
Eastern Kentucky	6	2	285	215	9	4	405	336
Eastern Illinois	5	3	301	159	5	7	376	307
Tennessee-Martin	5	3	239	205	6	6	356	342
Tennessee Tech	4	4	167	216	5	7	238	360
SE Missouri State	3	5	232	260	5	7	384	367
Tennessee State	3	5	191	227	6	6	332	274
Austin Peay	1	7	83	314	1	11	116	523
Murray State	1	7	245	344	3	9	439	510

PATRIOT LEAGUE

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Fordham	6	0	254	108	11	3	569	325
Bucknell	4	2	158	140	8	3	293	239
Lafayette	3	3	126	137	5	6	258	247
Colgate	3	3	116	109	5	7	257	278
Holy Cross	2	4	124	151	4	8	249	290
Lehigh	2	4	135	193	3	8	285	365
Georgetown	1	5	85	160	3	8	149	248

PIONEER LEAGUE

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Jacksonville	7	1	291	108	9	2	389	193
San Diego	7	1	234	193	9	3	441	207
Dayton	6	2	267	197	8	3	334	251
Drake	6	2	199	139	7	4	247	229
Campbell	4	4	198	203	5	7	283	343
Marist	4	4	174	144	4	7	188	221
Stetson	3	5	194	250	5	7	278	388
Morehead State	3	5	266	325	4	8	352	523
Butler	2	6	184	242	4	7	257	305
Valparaiso	2	6	177	224	4	8	287	337
Davidson	0	8	175	334	1	11	279	477

SOUTHERN

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
Chattanooga	7	0	292	108	10	4	486	271
Samford	5	2	227	138	7	4	355	217
Western Carolina	5	2	187	179	7	5	326	320
Wofford	4	3	154	130	6	5	300	253
The Citadel	3	4	174	186	5	7	320	344
Furman	2	5	142	232	3	9	210	340
Mercer	1	6	149	205	6	6	390	289
VMI	1	6	138	285	2	10	290	497

SOUTHLAND

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
SE Louisiana	7	1	378	133	9	4	523	230
Sam Houston State	7	1	341	162	11	5	543	450
Lamar	5	3	302	247	8	4	475	357
Northwestern State	5	3	274	217	7	5	388	375
Central Arkansas	5	3	363	264	6	6	488	406
McNeese State	4	4	223	196	6	5	356	250
Stephen F. Austin	4	4	288	232	7	6	425	371
Abilene Christian	4	4	241	211	6	6	392	325
Incarnate Word	2	6	148	273	2	9	164	418
Houston Baptist	1	7	101	464	2	9	210	524
Nicholls State	0	8	127	381	0	12	163	602

SWAC

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
EAST								
Alcorn State	7	2	407	187	10	3	572	254
Alabama State	5	4	278	197	7	5	355	296
Alabama A&M	3	6	257	287	4	8	314	392
Jackson State	3	6	222	279	5	7	310	331
Miss. Valley State	1	8	163	342	2	9	195	411
WEST								
Southern	8	1	332	277	9	4	445	425
Grambling State	7	2	336	262	7	5	386	387
Prairie View A&M	5	4	350	305	5	5	366	353
Arkansas-Pine Bluff	3	6	223	366	4	7	254	431
Texas Southern	3	6	204	270	5	6	286	300

INDEPENDENTS

	CONFERENCE				OVERALL			
	W	L	PF	PA	W	L	PF	PA
FBS								
Notre Dame	-	-	-	-	8	5	427	379
Navy	-	-	-	-	8	5	414	355
BYU	-	-	-	-	8	5	482	358
Army	-	-	-	-	4	8	299	395
FCS								
Charlotte	-	-	-	-	5	6	427	348

2014 NCAA FBS Stats

courtesy of NCAA

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

PASSING EFFICIENCY *(MINIMUM OF 15 ATTEMPTS PER GAME)*

	YEAR	G	ATT	CMP	PCT	INT	INT%	YDS	YDS/ATT	TD	TDPCT	RATING
Marcus Mariota, Oregon	JR	15	445	304	68.3	4	0.90	4454	10.01	42	9.44	181.7
J.T. Barrett, Ohio State	FR	12	314	203	64.6	10	3.18	2834	9.03	34	10.83	169.8
Brandon Doughty, Western Kentucky	SR	13	552	375	67.9	10	1.81	4830	8.75	49	8.88	167.1
Cody Kessler, USC	JR	13	452	315	69.7	5	1.11	3826	8.46	39	8.63	167.1
Garrett Grayson, Colorado State	SR	13	420	270	64.3	7	1.67	4006	9.54	32	7.62	166.2
Zach Terrell, Western Michigan	SO	13	368	250	67.9	10	2.72	3443	9.36	26	7.07	164.4
Blake Sims, Alabama	SR	14	391	252	64.5	10	2.56	3487	8.92	28	7.16	157.9
Bryce Petty, Baylor	SR	12	428	270	63.1	7	1.64	3855	9.01	29	6.78	157.8
Grant Hedrick, Boise State	SR	14	415	294	70.8	14	3.37	3696	8.91	23	5.54	157.2
Hutson Mason, Georgia	SR	13	277	188	67.9	4	1.44	2168	7.83	21	7.58	155.7
Rakeem Cato, Marshall	SR	14	451	267	59.2	13	2.88	3903	8.65	40	8.87	155.4
Jake Waters, Kansas State	SR	13	397	262	66.0	7	1.76	3501	8.82	22	5.54	154.8
Brett Hundley, UCLA	JR	13	392	271	69.1	5	1.28	3155	8.05	22	5.61	152.7
Dak Prescott, Mississippi State	JR	13	396	244	61.6	11	2.78	3449	8.71	27	6.82	151.7
Nick Marshall, Auburn	SR	13	293	178	60.8	7	2.39	2532	8.64	20	6.83	151.1
Joe Licata, Buffalo	JR	11	345	224	64.9	11	3.19	2647	7.67	29	8.41	150.7
Cooper Rush, Central Michigan	SO	13	382	243	63.6	13	3.40	3157	8.26	27	7.07	149.6
Gunner Kiel, Cincinnati	SO	13	390	233	59.7	13	3.33	3254	8.34	31	7.95	149.4
Connor Cook, Michigan State	JR	13	365	212	58.1	8	2.19	3214	8.81	24	6.58	149.4
Driphus Jackson, Rice	JR	13	331	191	57.7	8	2.42	2842	8.59	24	7.25	148.9
Jared Goff, California	SO	12	509	316	62.1	7	1.38	3973	7.81	35	6.88	147.6
Brad Kaaya, Miami (Fla.)	FR	13	378	221	58.5	12	3.17	3198	8.46	26	6.88	145.9
Trevone Boykin, TCU	JR	13	492	301	61.2	10	2.03	3901	7.93	33	6.71	145.9

TOTAL OFFENSE

			RUSHING				PASSING		TOTAL OFFENSE			
	YEAR	G	CAR	GAIN	LOSS	NET	ATT	YDS	PLAYS	YDS	YDS/PLAY	YDS/G
Connor Halliday, Washington State	SR	9	29	33	164	-131	526	3873	555	3742	6.74	415.8
Shane Carden, East Carolina	SR	13	96	323	247	76	617	4736	713	4812	6.75	370.2
Brandon Doughty, Western Kentucky	SR	13	39	77	129	-52	552	4830	591	4778	8.08	367.5
Trevone Boykin, TCU	JR	13	152	850	143	707	492	3901	644	4608	7.16	354.5
Marcus Mariota, Oregon	JR	15	135	952	182	770	445	4454	580	5224	9.01	348.3
Dak Prescott, Mississippi State	JR	13	210	1125	139	986	396	3449	606	4435	7.32	341.2
Bryce Petty, Baylor	SR	12	84	268	167	101	428	3855	512	3956	7.73	329.7
Jared Goff, California	SO	12	55	167	211	-44	509	3973	564	3929	6.97	327.4
Blake Frohnapfel, Massachusetts	SR	10	41	95	179	-84	437	3345	478	3261	6.82	326.1
J.T. Barrett, Ohio State	FR	12	171	1117	179	938	314	2834	485	3772	7.78	314.3
Rakeem Cato, Marshall	SR	14	94	622	140	482	451	3903	545	4385	8.05	313.2
Fredi Knighten, Arkansas State	JR	13	211	1090	311	779	432	3277	643	4056	6.31	312.0
Jake Waters, Kansas State	SR	13	154	705	221	484	397	3501	551	3985	7.23	306.5
Grant Hedrick, Boise State	SR	14	155	790	198	592	415	3696	570	4288	7.52	306.3
Jameis Winston, Florida State	SO	13	57	238	173	65	467	3907	524	3972	7.58	305.5
Garrett Grayson, Colorado State	SR	13	57	147	193	-46	420	4006	477	3960	8.30	304.6
Andrew Hendrix, Miami (Ohio)	SR	12	157	667	343	324	458	3280	615	3604	5.86	300.3
Marquise Williams, North Carolina	JR	13	193	1051	263	788	428	3068	621	3856	6.21	296.6
Brett Hundley, UCLA	JR	13	159	871	227	644	392	3155	551	3799	6.89	292.2
Anu Solomon, Arizona	FR	14	137	552	261	291	540	3793	677	4084	6.03	291.7
Clint Trickett, West Virginia	SR	11	42	78	184	-106	419	3285	461	3179	6.90	289.0
Everett Golson, Notre Dame	SR	13	114	532	249	283	427	3445	541	3728	6.89	286.8
Zach Terrell, Western Michigan	SO	13	78	409	145	264	368	3443	446	3707	8.31	285.2

ALL-PURPOSE YARDAGE

	YEAR	G	RUSH	REC	PR	KR	INT RET	MISC	YDS	YDS/G
Melvin Gordon, Wisconsin	JR	14	2587	153	0	0	0	0	2740	195.71
Tevin Coleman, Indiana	JR	12	2036	141	0	0	0	0	2177	181.42
Tyler Lockett, Kansas State	SR	13	17	1515	402	362	0	0	2296	176.62
Ameer Abdullah, Nebraska	SR	13	1611	269	0	392	0	0	2272	174.77
Jay Ajayi, Boise State	JR	14	1823	535	0	0	0	0	2358	168.43
Kareem Hunt, Toledo	SO	10	1631	39	0	0	0	0	1670	167.00
Duke Johnson, Miami (Fla.)	JR	13	1652	421	0	0	0	0	2073	159.46
Donnel Pumphrey, San Diego State	SO	13	1867	160	0	0	0	0	2027	155.92
Leon Allen, Western Kentucky	JR	13	1542	476	0	0	0	0	2018	155.23
J.J. Nelson, UAB	SR	12	45	655	277	843	0	0	1820	151.67
Tyreek Hill, Oklahoma State	JR	12	534	281	256	740	0	0	1811	150.92
Javorius Allen, USC	JR	13	1489	458	0	0	0	0	1947	149.77
Tyler Ervin, San Jose State	JR	12	888	306	81	506	0	0	1781	148.42
Tyler Boyd, Pittsburgh	SO	13	63	1261	162	442	0	0	1928	148.31
Rashard Higgins, Colorado State	SO	12	0	1750	0	0	0	0	1750	145.83
Devon Johnson, Marshall	JR	13	1767	121	0	0	0	0	1888	145.23
Devontae Booker, Utah	JR	13	1512	306	0	57	0	0	1875	144.23
Lucky Whitehead, Florida Atlantic	SR	12	210	706	311	493	0	0	1720	143.33
Elijah McGuire, Louisiana	SO	13	1264	468	116	0	0	0	1848	142.15
James Conner, Pittsburgh	SO	13	1765	70	0	0	0	0	1835	141.15
Ezekiel Elliott, Ohio State	SO	15	1878	220	0	16	0	0	2114	140.93
Samaje Perine, Oklahoma	FR	13	1713	108	0	0	0	0	1821	140.08
Vince Mayle, Washington State	SR	12	0	1483	0	177	0	0	1660	138.33

J.T. Barrett
169.8 Passing Efficiency

RECEIVING YARDS

	YEAR	G	REC	YDS	TD	YDS/G
Rashard Higgins, Colorado State	SO	12	96	1750	17	145.8
Amari Cooper, Alabama	JR	14	124	1727	16	123.4
Tyler Lockett, Kansas State	SR	13	106	1515	11	116.5
Justin Hardy, East Carolina	SR	13	121	1494	10	114.9
Vince Mayle, Washington State	SR	12	106	1483	9	123.6
Kevin White, West Virginia	SR	13	109	1447	10	111.3
Corey Davis, Western Michigan	SO	12	78	1408	15	117.3
Rashad Greene, Florida State	SR	14	99	1365	7	97.5
Nelson Agholor, USC	JR	13	104	1313	12	101.0
Tajae Sharpe, Massachusetts	JR	12	85	1281	7	106.8
Tyler Boyd, Pittsburgh	SO	13	78	1261	8	97.0
Keevan Lucas, Tulsa	SO	12	101	1219	11	101.6
Tony Lippett, Michigan State	SR	13	65	1198	11	92.2
Nelson Spruce, Colorado	JR	12	106	1198	12	99.8
Jaelen Strong, Arizona State	JR	12	82	1165	10	97.1

INTERCEPTIONS

	YEAR	G	INT	YDS	TD	INT/G
Gerod Holliman, Louisville	JR	13	14	245	1	1.1
Senquez Golson, Ole Miss	SR	13	10	162	1	0.8
Quinten Rollins, Miami (Ohio)	SR	12	7	35	1	0.6
Jacoby Glenn, UCF	SO	13	7	29	0	0.5
Chris Hackett, TCU	JR	13	7	131	0	0.5
Darian Thompson, Boise State	JR	13	7	53	1	0.5
Kevin Byard, Middle Tennessee	JR	12	6	1	0	0.5
Donte Deayon, Boise State	JR	12	6	70	2	0.5
Montres Kitchens, Troy	JR	12	6	80	1	0.5
Parry Nickerson, Tulane	FR	12	6	24	0	0.5
Frankie Sutera, Utah State	SR	14	7	96	0	0.5
Erick Dargan, Oregon	SR	15	7	110	0	0.5
Jonathan Jones, Auburn	JR	13	6	6	0	0.5
William Likely, Maryland	SO	13	6	170	2	0.5
Zack Sanchez, Oklahoma	SO	13	6	43	1	0.5
Weston Steelhammer, Air Force	SO	13	6	10	0	0.5

SCORING

	YEAR	G	TD	XP	FG	PTS	PTS/G
Jay Ajayi, Boise State	JR	14	32	0	0	192	13.7
Melvin Gordon, Wisconsin	JR	14	32	0	0	192	13.7
Keenan Reynolds, Navy	JR	11	23	0	0	138	12.5
James Conner, Pittsburgh	SO	13	26	0	0	156	12.0
Kenneth Dixon, Louisiana Tech	JR	14	28	0	0	168	12.0
Jarvion Franklin, Western Michigan	FR	13	25	0	0	150	11.5
Jaden Oberkrom, TCU	JR	13	0	76	22	142	10.9
Josh Lambert, West Virginia	SO	13	0	45	30	135	10.4
Ameer Abdullah, Nebraska	SR	13	22	0	0	132	10.2
Jeremy Langford, Michigan State	SR	13	22	0	0	132	10.2
Chris Callahan, Baylor	FR	13	0	75	18	129	9.9
Zane Gonzalez, Arizona State	SO	12	0	50	22	118	9.8
Roberto Aguayo, Florida State	SO	14	0	55	27	136	9.7
Samaje Perine, Oklahoma	FR	13	21	0	0	126	9.7
Kareem Hunt, Toledo	SO	10	16	0	0	96	9.6

RUSHING

	YEAR	G	CAR	YDS	TD	AVG	YDS/G
Melvin Gordon, Wisconsin	JR	14	343	2587	29	7.54	184.8
Tevin Coleman, Indiana	JR	12	270	2036	15	7.54	169.7
Kareem Hunt, Toledo	SO	10	205	1631	16	7.96	163.1
Donnel Pumphrey, San Diego State	SO	13	276	1867	20	6.76	143.6
Devon Johnson, Marshall	JR	13	206	1767	17	8.58	135.9
James Conner, Pittsburgh	SO	13	298	1765	26	5.92	135.8
Jordan Howard, UAB	SO	12	306	1587	13	5.19	132.3
Samaje Perine, Oklahoma	FR	13	263	1713	21	6.51	131.8
Jay Ajayi, Boise State	JR	14	347	1823	28	5.25	130.2
Anthone Taylor, Buffalo	SR	11	282	1403	12	4.98	127.5
Duke Johnson, Miami (Fla.)	JR	13	242	1652	10	6.83	127.1
Ezekiel Elliott, Ohio State	SO	15	273	1878	18	6.88	125.2
David Cobb, Minnesota	SR	13	314	1626	13	5.18	125.1
Ameer Abdullah, Nebraska	SR	13	264	1611	19	6.10	123.9
Cameron Artis-Payne, Auburn	SR	13	303	1608	13	5.31	123.7

BARRETT: JAY LAPRETE / AP

SACKS

	YEAR	G	SOLO	AST	YDS	TOTAL	SACKS/G
Nate Orchard, Utah	SR	13	17	3	118	18.5	1.42
Hau'oli Kikaha, Washington	SR	14	18	2	130	19.0	1.36
Shane Ray, Missouri	JR	14	12	5	94	14.5	1.04
Scooby Wright III, Arizona	SO	14	14	0	71	14.0	1.00
Pete Robertson, Texas Tech	JR	12	12	0	67	12.0	1.00
Myles Garrett, Texas A&M	FR	12	10	3	67	11.5	0.96
Zach Patt, Rice	SR	10	9	1	64	9.5	0.95
Vic Beasley, Clemson	SR	13	12	0	95	12.0	0.92
Hunter Dimick, Utah	SO	11	8	4	57	10.0	0.91
Joey Bosa, Ohio State	SO	15	12	3	96	13.5	0.90
Andrew Hudson, Washington	SR	14	12	1	68	12.5	0.89
Christian Ringo, Louisiana	SR	13	11	1	89	11.5	0.88
Kamalei Correa, Boise State	SO	14	11	2	60	12.0	0.86
Ja'Von Rolland-Jones, Arkansas State	FR	10	8	1	44	8.5	0.85
Curt Maggitt, Tennessee	JR	13	11	0	56	11.0	0.85
Shawn Oakman, Baylor	JR	13	11	0	73	11.0	0.85
Emmanuel Ogbah, Oklahoma State	SO	13	11	0	78	11.0	0.85
Diaheem Watkins, UAB	SR	12	10	0	69	10.0	0.83

PUNT RETURNS *(MINIMUM OF 1.2 RETURNS PER GAME)*

	YEAR	G	NO.	YDS	TDs	YDS/RET
Tyler Lockett, Kansas State	SR	13	21	402	2	19.1
De'Mornay Pierson-El, Nebraska	FR	13	34	596	3	17.5
Lucky Whitehead, Florida Atlantic	SR	12	19	311	1	16.4
Kaelin Clay, Utah	SR	13	23	346	3	15.0
Andre Debose, Florida	SR	11	23	323	1	14.0
Jamison Crowder, Duke	SR	13	22	280	2	12.7
Isaiah McKenzie, Georgia	FR	12	19	230	2	12.1
Speedy Noil, Texas A&M	FR	12	15	180	0	12.0
Jalin Marshall, Ohio State	FR	15	24	283	1	11.8
Jojo Natson, Utah State	JR	13	25	292	2	11.7
Lloyd Mills, San Diego State	SO	13	18	205	1	11.4
William Likely, Maryland	SO	13	19	210	1	11.1
Tre'Davious White, LSU	SO	13	25	273	1	10.9

PUNTING *(MINIMUM OF 3.6 PUNTS PER GAME)*

	YEAR	G	P	YDS	AVG
JK Scott, Alabama	FR	13	55	2640	48.0
Austin Rehkow, Idaho	SO	11	44	2101	47.8
Tom Hackett, Utah	JR	13	80	3736	46.7
Drew Riggleman, Arizona	JR	14	76	3501	46.1
Dalton Schomp, Florida Atlantic	SO	12	50	2272	45.4
Wil Baumann, N.C. State	SR	13	60	2724	45.4
Peter Mortell, Minnesota	JR	13	67	3025	45.1
Scott Arellano, BYU	SR	13	69	3106	45.0
Jamie Keehn, LSU	JR	13	71	3189	44.9
Mattias Ciabattti, South Florida	JR	12	65	2888	44.4
Alex Boy, Nevada	SO	13	59	2614	44.3
Anthony Melchiori, Kent State	JR	11	67	2966	44.3
Trevor Pardula, Kansas	SR	12	83	3673	44.3

FIELD GOALS

	YEAR	G	FGA	FGM	PCT	FGM/G
Josh Lambert, West Virginia	SO	13	39	30	.769	2.31
Scott Secor, Ball State	SR	12	30	25	.833	2.08
Roberto Aguayo, Florida State	SO	14	30	27	.900	1.93
Sam Ficken, Penn State	SR	13	29	24	.828	1.85
Ian Frye, Virginia	JR	12	27	22	.815	1.83
Zane Gonzalez, Arizona State	SO	12	27	22	.815	1.83
Andy Phillips, Utah	SO	13	28	23	.821	1.77
Austin MacGinnis, Kentucky	FR	12	27	21	.778	1.75
Ben Grogan, Oklahoma State	SO	13	28	22	.786	1.69
Jaden Oberkrom, TCU	JR	13	27	22	.815	1.69
Justin Manton, Louisiana-Monroe	SR	12	24	20	.833	1.67
Tyler Tate, Bowling Green	JR	14	29	23	.793	1.64
Jake Elliott, Memphis	SO	13	32	21	.656	1.62

KICKOFF RETURNS *(MINIMUM OF 1.2 RETURNS PER GAME)*

	YEAR	G	NO.	YDS	TD	AVG
J.J. Nelson, UAB	SR	12	22	843	4	38.3
Trevor Davis, California	JR	10	13	424	2	32.6
Alex Ross, Oklahoma	SO	13	23	718	2	31.2
William Likely, Maryland	SO	13	16	496	1	31.0
Adoree' Jackson, USC	FR	13	23	684	2	29.7
Marcus Murphy, Missouri	SR	14	17	504	2	29.6
Deandre Reaves, Marshall	JR	14	32	931	1	29.1
Mario Alford, West Virginia	SR	13	26	743	2	28.6
Jalen Myrick, Minnesota	SO	13	18	508	1	28.2
Tyler Boyd, Pittsburgh	SO	13	16	442	0	27.6
Rannell Hall, UCF	SR	10	12	330	0	27.5
Darius Jennings, Virginia	SR	12	25	677	0	27.1
Stanley Williams, Kentucky	FR	10	19	511	0	26.9

TEAM LEADERS

RUSHING OFFENSE

	G	CAR	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
Georgia Tech	14	790	4789	6.06	47	342.1
Navy	13	727	4395	6.05	45	338.1
Wisconsin	14	648	4482	6.92	46	320.1
New Mexico	12	586	3725	6.36	34	310.4
Army	12	665	3558	5.35	33	296.5
Air Force	13	796	3550	4.46	34	273.1
Marshall	14	559	3807	6.81	40	271.9
Ohio State	15	690	3967	5.75	41	264.5
Indiana	12	539	3163	5.87	29	263.6
Oklahoma	13	557	3395	6.10	40	261.2
Georgia	13	555	3352	6.04	38	257.8
Toledo	13	576	3333	5.79	35	256.4
Auburn	13	607	3321	5.47	32	255.5
Boston College	13	635	3311	5.21	31	254.7
Pittsburgh	13	610	3243	5.32	35	249.5
Northern Illinois	14	688	3488	5.07	36	249.1
Nebraska	13	587	3123	5.32	35	240.2
Texas State	12	538	2862	5.32	29	238.5

TURNOVER MARGIN

	GAINED			LOST			
	FUM	INT	GAINED	FUM	INT	LOST	MARGIN/G
Oregon	21	13	34	7	4	11	1.53
Michigan State	16	18	34	6	9	15	1.46
TCU	14	26	40	11	11	22	1.38
Georgia	13	16	29	7	6	13	1.23
Louisiana Tech	16	26	42	13	13	26	1.14
Arizona State	13	14	27	4	9	13	1.08
Baylor	13	13	26	5	8	13	1.00
Florida International	19	14	33	12	10	22	0.92
Washington	16	13	29	11	6	17	0.86
Northern Illinois	10	14	24	9	3	12	0.86
USC	9	14	23	7	5	12	0.85
Memphis	14	17	31	11	9	20	0.85
Nevada	14	13	27	5	11	16	0.85
Georgia Tech	11	18	29	12	6	18	0.79
Minnesota	15	15	30	11	9	20	0.77
Ball State	14	10	24	8	7	15	0.75
Bowling Green	17	16	33	10	13	23	0.71
UTEP	10	11	21	6	6	12	0.69

RUSHING DEFENSE

	G	CAR	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
Michigan State	13	363	1150	3.17	18	88.5
Boston College	13	399	1228	3.08	14	94.5
Penn State	13	443	1306	2.95	14	100.5
Alabama	14	452	1434	3.17	5	102.4
Clemson	13	453	1344	2.97	11	103.4
UCF	13	428	1356	3.17	10	104.3
Stanford	13	443	1358	3.07	12	104.5
Oklahoma	13	458	1383	3.02	15	106.4
TCU	13	508	1414	2.78	9	108.8
Louisville	13	435	1416	3.26	12	108.9
East Carolina	13	437	1453	3.32	16	111.8
Arkansas	13	429	1490	3.47	11	114.6
Florida	12	440	1394	3.17	10	116.2
Toledo	13	431	1511	3.51	13	116.2
Michigan	12	440	1412	3.21	13	117.7
Baylor	13	485	1530	3.15	17	117.7
Louisiana Tech	14	500	1655	3.31	19	118.2
Virginia	12	431	1448	3.36	11	120.7

PASSING OFFENSE

	G	ATT	COMP	INT	PCT	YDS	TD	YDS/G
Washington State	12	771	510	18	66.1	5732	45	477.7
Western Kentucky	13	557	378	10	67.9	4866	49	374.3
East Carolina	13	637	402	11	63.1	4835	31	371.9
Baylor	13	519	323	8	62.2	4757	38	365.9
Texas Tech	12	559	332	18	59.4	4213	40	351.1
California	12	535	329	10	61.5	4152	37	346.0
TCU	13	529	325	11	61.4	4240	37	326.2
Colorado State	13	447	286	7	64.0	4181	34	321.6
West Virginia	13	534	340	10	63.7	4121	26	317.0
Oregon	15	474	326	4	68.8	4687	44	312.5
Massachusetts	12	492	269	13	54.7	3741	27	311.8
Texas A&M	13	514	332	15	64.6	3971	39	305.5
Cincinnati	13	491	294	14	59.9	3947	35	303.6
Florida State	14	516	330	20	64.0	4246	26	303.3
USC	13	460	318	5	69.1	3856	39	296.6
Kansas State	13	415	271	8	65.3	3736	23	287.4
Marshall	14	473	279	13	59.0	4022	40	287.3
Notre Dame	13	463	277	14	59.8	3711	30	285.5
Colorado	12	545	348	15	63.9	3415	29	284.6

TOTAL OFFENSE

	G	PLAYS	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
Baylor	13	1138	7559	6.64	82	581.5
Marshall	14	1032	7829	7.59	84	559.2
Oregon	15	1118	8205	7.34	90	547.0
West. Kentucky	13	986	6950	7.05	76	534.6
TCU	13	1038	6929	6.68	77	533.0
East Carolina	13	1070	6929	6.48	61	533.0
Washington State	12	1014	6212	6.12	50	517.5
Mississippi State	13	1001	6679	6.67	64	513.8
Ohio State	15	1099	7674	6.98	90	511.6
Texas Tech	12	914	6049	6.62	49	504.1
Michigan State	13	991	6510	6.55	74	500.8
West Virginia	13	1097	6497	5.92	49	499.8
California	12	975	5942	6.09	61	495.2
Boise State	14	1060	6920	6.53	73	494.3
Toledo	13	973	6377	6.55	61	490.5
Auburn	13	939	6305	6.71	58	485.0
Alabama	14	1018	6783	6.66	68	484.5

PASS-EFFICIENCY DEFENSE

	G	ATT	COMP	PCT	INT	INT%	YDS	YDS/ATT	TD	RATING
Clemson	13	388	194	50.0	12	3.09	2046	5.3	12	98.32
Penn State	13	406	215	53.0	16	3.94	2317	5.7	10	101.14
LSU	13	385	199	51.7	10	2.60	2134	5.5	10	101.62
Nebraska	13	441	214	48.5	13	2.95	2676	6.1	15	104.83
Louisville	13	410	221	53.9	26	6.34	2595	6.3	14	105.65
Stanford	13	430	245	57.0	12	2.79	2313	5.4	12	105.79
Georgia	13	379	204	53.8	16	4.22	2215	5.8	13	105.79
Memphis	13	494	264	53.4	17	3.44	2964	6.0	14	106.31
TCU	13	445	216	48.5	26	5.84	3029	6.8	17	106.64
Florida	12	429	228	53.1	16	3.73	2563	6.0	15	107.41
UCF	13	441	243	55.1	18	4.08	2525	5.7	17	107.76
San Jose State	12	241	134	55.6	6	2.49	1414	5.9	6	108.12
Ohio State	15	495	276	55.8	25	5.05	3016	6.1	17	108.17
Virginia Tech	13	384	183	47.7	12	3.13	2587	6.7	13	109.17
Texas	13	419	247	58.9	15	3.58	2395	5.7	13	110.04
Ole Miss	13	402	240	59.7	22	5.47	2497	6.2	12	110.78
Utah State	14	489	265	54.2	19	3.89	3155	6.5	16	111.42

TOTAL DEFENSE

	G	PLAYS	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
Clemson	13	841	3390	4.03	27	260.8
Penn State	13	849	3623	4.27	27	278.7
Stanford	13	873	3671	4.21	26	282.4
Wisconsin	14	839	4117	4.91	35	294.1
UCF	13	869	3881	4.47	29	298.5
Louisville	13	845	4011	4.75	31	308.5
Michigan	12	783	3736	4.77	31	311.3
Michigan State	13	807	4105	5.09	36	315.8
LSU	13	845	4119	4.87	27	316.8
Arkansas	13	821	4204	5.12	33	323.4
Boston College	13	822	4215	5.13	34	324.2
Alabama	14	945	4598	4.87	27	328.4
Ole Miss	13	915	4277	4.67	24	329.0
Miami (Fla.)	13	895	4285	4.79	40	329.6
Florida	12	869	3957	4.55	30	329.8
San Diego State	13	877	4322	4.93	33	332.5
Georgia	13	905	4384	4.84	36	337.2
TCU	13	953	4443	4.66	28	341.8

SCORING OFFENSE

	G	TD	PTS	PTS/G
Baylor	13	82	627	48.2
TCU	13	77	604	46.5
Marshall	14	84	638	45.6
Oregon	15	90	681	45.4
Ohio State	15	90	672	44.8
West. Kentucky	13	76	577	44.4
Michigan State	13	74	559	43.0
Georgia	13	70	537	41.3
Boise State	14	73	556	39.7
California	12	61	459	38.3
Georgia Tech	14	72	530	37.9
Nebraska	13	64	491	37.8
Louisiana Tech	14	68	523	37.4
BYU	13	63	482	37.1
Alabama	14	68	517	36.9
Mississippi State	13	64	480	36.9
Arizona State	13	59	480	36.9
Arkansas State	13	65	477	36.7

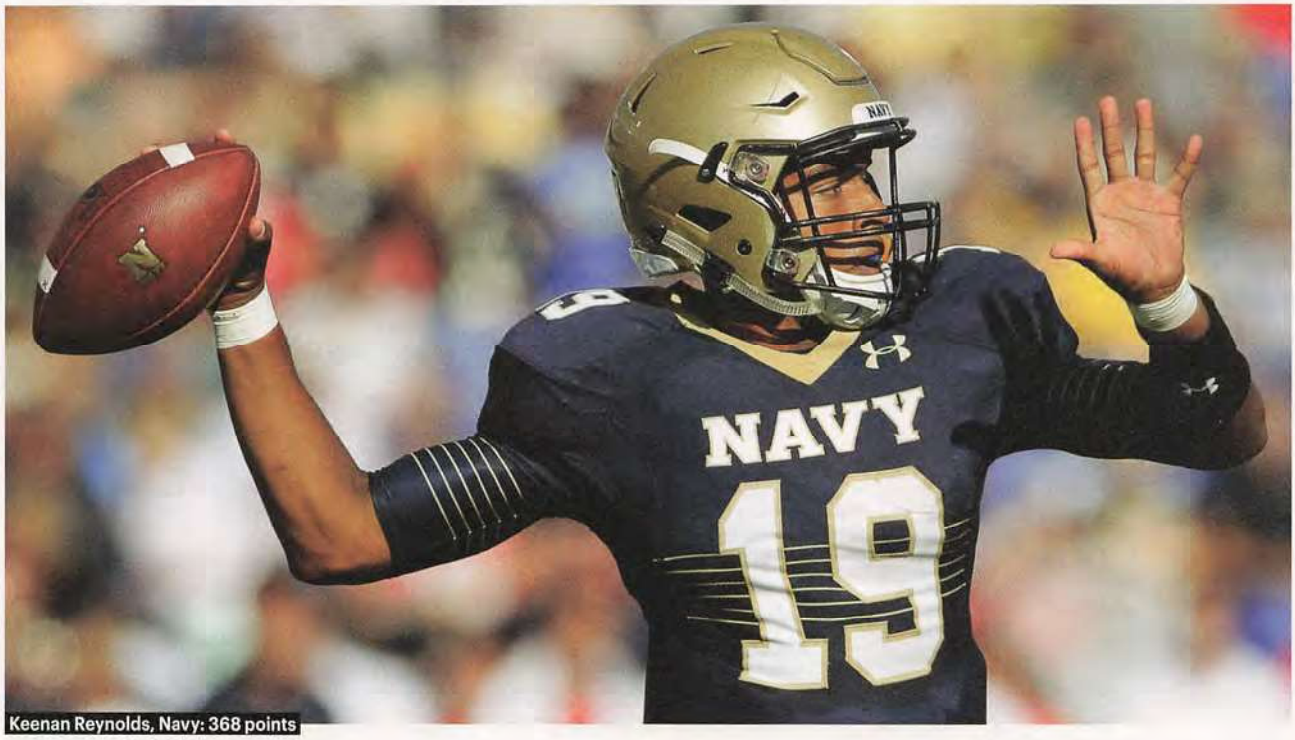
SCORING DEFENSE

	G	TD	PTS	PTS/G
Ole Miss	13	24	208	16.0
Stanford	13	26	213	16.4
Clemson	13	27	217	16.7
Temple	12	24	210	17.5
LSU	13	27	228	17.5
Alabama	14	27	258	18.4
Penn State	13	27	242	18.6
TCU	13	28	247	19.0
UCF	13	29	249	19.2
Arkansas	13	33	250	19.2
Memphis	13	32	253	19.5
Utah State	14	33	276	19.7
San Diego State	13	33	258	19.8
Virginia Tech	13	30	262	20.2
Houston	13	33	268	20.6
Georgia	13	36	269	20.7
Wisconsin	14	35	291	20.8
Marshall	14	36	294	21.0

Targets

A look at the all-time FBS leaders and the players who could challenge them in 2015.

■ Active players in CAPS ■ Statistics courtesy of the NCAA ■ Compiled by Will Long



Keenan Reynolds, Navy: 368 points

PASSING YARDS	
Case Keenum, Houston	19,217
Timmy Chang, Hawaii	17,072
Landry Jones, Oklahoma	16,646
Graham Harrell, Texas Tech	15,793
Ty Detmer, BYU	15,031
Kellen Moore, Boise State	14,667
Colt Brennan, Hawaii	14,193
Rakeem Cato, Marshall	13,798
Sean Mannion, Oregon State	13,600
Philip Rivers, N.C. State	13,484
Corey Robinson, Troy	13,477
Colt McCoy, Texas	13,253
Aaron Murray, Georgia	13,166
Kevin Kolb, Houston	12,964
Dan LeFevour, Central Michigan	12,905
Derek Carr, Fresno State	12,842
Tim Rattay, Louisiana Tech	12,746
Ryan Lindley, San Diego State	12,690
Luke McCown, Louisiana Tech	12,666
Chris Redman, Louisville	12,541
Chase Daniel, Missouri	12,515
Trevor Vittatoe, UTEP	12,439
Kliff Kingsbury, Texas Tech	12,429
Matt Barkley, USC	12,327
Zac Dysert, Miami (Ohio)	12,013
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
JARED GOFF, CALIFORNIA	7,481
TREVONE BOYKIN, TCU	7,153
CODY KESSLER, USC	6,803

POINTS	
Montee Ball, Wisconsin	500
Travis Prentice, Miami (OH)	468
Dustin Hopkins, Florida State	466
Ricky Williams, Texas	452
Aaron Jones, Baylor	451
Mike Hunnicutt, Oklahoma	450
Kyle Brotzman, Boise State	439
Art Carmody, Louisville	433
Kevin Kelly, Penn State	425
Roman Anderson, Houston	423
Taurean Henderson, Texas Tech	414
Blair Walsh, Georgia	412
Billy Bennett, Georgia	409
Matt Weller, Ohio	409
Brock Forsey, Boise State	408
Ross Evans, TCU	407
Matt Hogan, Houston	405
Cedric Benson, Texas	404
Chandler Catanzaro, Clemson	404
Jeremy Ito, Rutgers	400
Carlos Huerta, Miami (Fla.)	397
Alex Henery, Nebraska	397
Jason Elam, Hawaii	395
Anthony Thompson, Indiana	394
Derek Schmidt, Florida State	393
Nick Novak, Maryland	393
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
KEENAN REYNOLDS, NAVY	368
KENNETH DIXON, LOUISIANA TECH	354
JADEN OBERKROM, TCU	323

TOUCHDOWN PASSES	
Case Keenum, Houston	155
Kellen Moore, Boise State	142
Graham Harrell, Texas Tech	134
Colt Brennan, Hawaii	131
Rakeem Cato, Marshall	128
Landry Jones, Oklahoma	123
Ty Detmer, BYU	121
Aaron Murray, Georgia	121
Timmy Chang, Hawaii	117
Matt Barkley, USC	116
Tim Rattay, Louisiana Tech	115
Danny Wuerffel, Florida	114
Derek Carr, Fresno State	113
Colt McCoy, Texas	112
Russell Wilson, N.C. State/Wisconsin	109
Tajh Boyd, Clemson	107
Dan LeFevour, Central Michigan	102
Chase Daniel, Missouri	101
Marcus Mariota, Oregon	101
Chad Pennington, Marshall	100
Matt Leinart, USC	99
Chase Clement, Rice	99
Tim Hiller, Western Michigan	99
Geno Smith, West Virginia	98
Trevor Vittatoe, UTEP	97
Kliff Kingsbury, Texas Tech	95
Philip Rivers, N.C. State	95
Brady Quinn, Notre Dame	95
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
JOE LICATA, BUFFALO	60
CODY KESSLER, USC	59
TREVONE BOYKIN, TCU	55

RUSHING YARDS	
Ron Dayne, Wisconsin	6,397
Ricky Williams, Texas	6,279
Tony Dorsett, Pittsburgh	6,082
DeAngelo Williams, Memphis	6,026
Charles White, USC	5,598
Travis Prentice, Miami (Ohio)	5,596
Cedric Benson, Texas	5,540
Damion Fletcher, Southern Miss	5,302
LaDainian Tomlinson, TCU	5,263
Herschel Walker, Georgia	5,259
Archie Griffin, Ohio State	5,177
Avon Cobourne, West Virginia	5,164
Garrett Wolfe, Northern Illinois	5,164
Montee Ball, Wisconsin	5,140
LaMichael James, Oregon	5,082
Mike Hart, Michigan	5,040
Darren Lewis, Texas A&M	5,012
Darren Sproles, Kansas State	4,979
DonTrell Moore, New Mexico	4,973
Anthony Thompson, Indiana	4,965
George Rogers, South Carolina	4,958
Trevor Cobb, Rice	4,948
Michael Turner, Northern Illinois	4,941
Ray Rice, Rutgers	4,926
Paul Palmer, Temple	4,895
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
KENNETH DIXON, LOUISIANA TECH	3,410
KEENAN REYNOLDS, NAVY	3,186
BRAXTON MILLER, OHIO STATE	3,054

REYNOLDS: PATRICK SEMANSKY / AP

Rashard Higgins, Colorado State: 2,587 receiving yards

RECEIVING YARDS	
Trevor Insley, Nevada	5,005
Ryan Broyles, Oklahoma	4,586
Marcus Harris, Wyoming	4,518
Patrick Edwards, Houston	4,507
Rashaun Woods, Oklahoma State	4,414
Justin Hardy, East Carolina	4,381
Ryan Yarborough, Wyoming	4,357
Troy Edwards, Louisiana Tech	4,352
Aaron Turner, Pacific	4,345
Greg Salas, Hawaii	4,345
Terance Mathis, New Mexico	4,254
Geoff Noisy, Nevada	4,249
Jordan White, Western Michigan	4,187
Jarett Dillard, Rice	4,138
Darius Watts, Marshall	4,031
Kendall Wright, Baylor	4,004
Troy Walters, Stanford	3,986
Derek Hagan, Arizona State	3,939
Mike Hass, Oregon State	3,924
Jason Rivers, Hawaii	3,919
Josh Davis, Marshall	3,889
Roy Williams, Texas	3,866
Emmanuel Sanders, SMU	3,791
Chad Mackey, Louisiana Tech	3,789
Rashad Greene, Florida State	3,771
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
RASHARD HIGGINS, COLORADO STATE	2,587
ALONZO RUSSELL, TOLEDO	2,458
TYLER BOYD, PITTSBURGH	2,435

INTERCEPTIONS	
Al Brosky, Illinois	29
John Provost, Holy Cross	27
Martin Bayless, Bowling Green	27
Tom Curtis, Michigan	25
Tony Thurman, Boston College	25
Tracy Saul, Texas Tech	25
Jeff Nixon, Richmond	23
Jim Bolding, East Carolina	22
Lamont Thompson, Washington State	22
Mike Sensibaugh, Ohio State	21
Barry Hill, Iowa State	21
Chuck Cecil, Arizona	21
Terrell Buckley, Florida State	21
Ed Reed, Miami	21
Jim Leonhard, Wisconsin	21
Alphonso Smith, Wake Forest	21
Lynn Chandnois, Michigan State	20
Bobby Wilson, Ole Miss	20
Tom Wilson, Colgate	20
Jackie Wallace, Arizona	20
Dave Atkinson, BYU	20
Artimus Parker, USC	20
Charles Jefferson, McNeese State	20
Chris Williams, LSU	20
Anthony Young, Temple	20
Mark Collins, Cal State Fullerton	20
Kevin Smith, Texas A&M	20
Ray Jackson, Colorado State	20
Dre' Bly, North Carolina	20
Mitch Meeuwsen, Oregon State	20
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
KEVIN BYARD, MIDDLE TENNESSEE	15
DARIAN THOMPSON, BOISE STATE	14
DONTE DEAYON, BOISE STATE	13
ADRIAN MCDONALD, HOUSTON	13

J.D. McKissic, Arkansas State: 237 receptions

RECEPTIONS			
Justin Hardy, East Carolina	387	Davone Bess, Hawaii	293
Ryan Broyles, Oklahoma	349	Rashaun Woods, Oklahoma State	293
Taylor Stubblefield, Purdue	325	Dorien Bryant, Purdue	292
Tommy Shuler, Marshall	322	Jarett Dillard, Rice	292
Tyron Carrier, Houston	320	Jason Rivers, Hawaii	292
Josh Davis, Marshall	306	Patrick Edwards, Houston	291
Eric Page, Toledo	306	Bryan Anderson, Central Michigan	290
Jordan White, Western Michigan	306	Tavon Austin, West Virginia	288
Antonio Brown, Central Michigan	305	Greg Salas, Hawaii	285
Taurean Henderson, Texas Tech	303	Emmanuel Sanders, SMU	285
Kendall Wright, Baylor	302	**KNOCKING ON THE DOOR** *(active career leaders)*	
Arnold Jackson, Louisville	300		
Trevor Insley, Nevada	298	J.D. MCKISSIC, ARKANSAS STATE	237
Freddie Barnes, Bowling Green	297	NELSON SPRUCE, COLORADO	205
Geoff Noisy, Nevada	295	SHANE WILLIAMS-RHODES, BOISE STATE	170

HIGGINS: EUGENE TANNER / AP; MCKISSIC: G.M. ANDREWS / AP

2015 FCS Schedules

compiled by Will Long

ABILENE CHRISTIAN
Abilene, TX

S.5	@FRESNO STATE	
S.19	Houston Baptist	59-14
S.26	Stephen F. Austin	37-35
O.3	@CENTRAL ARKANSAS	52-35
O.10	@LAMAR	21-24
O.17	Sam Houston State	21-38
O.24	@INCARNATE WORD	21-0
O.31	McNeese State	20-31
N.7	@NORTHWESTERN STATE	10-34
N.14	Southeastern Louisiana	
N.21	@NORTHERN COLORADO	

Coach: Ken Collums
Nickname: Wildcats
2014 Record: 6-6

ALABAMA A&M
Normal, AL

S.5	@CINCINNATI	
S.19	@PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	35-38
S.26	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	19-20
O.3	@COASTAL CAROLINA	
O.10	@GRAMBLING STATE	28-38
O.17	Jackson State	25-14
O.31	Alabama State*	37-36
N.7	Mississippi Valley State	42-20
N.14	@SOUTHERN	34-35
N.21	@ALCORN STATE	14-41
N.28	Texas Southern	23-45

*At Birmingham, AL
Coach: James Spady
Nickname: Bulldogs
2014 Record: 4-8

ALABAMA STATE
Montgomery, AL

S.6	@TENNESSEE STATE	27-21
S.12	Alcorn State	7-33
S.19	Grambling State	37-23
S.26	@MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE	47-22
O.3	@TEXAS SOUTHERN	38-3
O.10	Southern	21-28
O.17	@ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF	42-7
O.31	Alabama A&M*	36-37
N.7	@JACKSON STATE	26-10
N.14	Prairie View A&M	24-34
N.21	Miles	

*At Birmingham, AL
Coach: Brian Jenkins
Nickname: Hornets
2014 Record: 7-5

ALBANY
Albany, NY

S.5	@BUFFALO	
S.12	Rhode Island	37-20
S.19	@JAMES MADISON	28-31
S.26	Duquesne	
O.3	@HOLY CROSS	14-13
O.10	Maine	20-7
O.17	Villanova	31-48
O.31	@RICHMOND	28-41
N.7	@DELAWARE	28-31
N.14	New Hampshire	24-49
N.21	@STONY BROOK	27-17

Coach: Greg Gattuso
Nickname: Great Danes
2014 Record: 7-5

ALCORN STATE
Lorman, MS

S.3	@GEORGIA TECH	
S.12	@ALABAMA STATE	33-7
S.19	Mississippi Valley State	52-9
S.26	Concordia (Miss.)	
O.3	@ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF	56-6
O.17	Grambling State	21-28
O.31	@SOUTHERN	38-24
N.7	Prairie View A&M	77-48
N.14	@TEXAS SOUTHERN	40-25
N.21	Alabama A&M	41-14
N.28	@JACKSON STATE	31-34

Coach: Jay Hopson
Nickname: Braves
2014 Record: 10-3

ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF
Pine Bluff, AR

S.6	South Carolina State*	
S.19	Texas Southern	38-37
S.26	@ALABAMA A&M	20-19
O.3	Alcorn State	6-56
O.17	Alabama State	7-42
O.24	@JACKSON STATE	30-33
O.31	@PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	23-51
N.7	Southern	36-51
N.14	Grambling State	39-63
N.21	@MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE	24-14

*At Orlando, FL
Coach: Monte Coleman
Nickname: Golden Lions
2014 Record: 4-7

AUSTIN PEAY
Clarksville, TN

S.5	Mercer	21-49
S.12	@SOUTHERN MISS	
S.19	@VANDERBILT	
S.26	@EASTERN KENTUCKY	0-31
O.3	Eastern Illinois	7-63
O.10	@MURRAY STATE	20-13
O.17	Tennessee-Martin	7-37
O.24	Jacksonville State	0-56
O.31	@TENNESSEE STATE	27-31
N.7	Southeast Missouri State	7-42
N.14	@TENNESSEE TECH	15-41

Coach: Kirby Cannon
Nickname: Governors
2014 Record: 1-11

BETHUNE-COOKMAN
Daytona Beach, FL

S.5	@MIAMI (FLA.)	
S.12	@GRAMBLING STATE	36-23
S.19	Lane	
S.26	Savannah State	48-20
O.3	@NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL	34-20
O.10	South Carolina State	14-20
O.17	@NORTH CAROLINA A&T	
O.24	Norfolk State	13-7
O.31	@DELAWARE STATE	27-7
N.7	Morgan State	
N.21	Florida A&M*	18-17

*At Orlando, FL
Coach: Terry Sims
Nickname: Wildcats
2014 Record: 9-3

BROWN
Providence, RI

S.19	Bryant	
S.26	@HARVARD	14-22
O.3	Rhode Island	20-13
O.10	@HOLY CROSS	27-24
O.17	Princeton	16-27
O.24	@CORNELL	42-16
O.31	Pennsylvania	21-13
N.7	@YALE	42-45
N.14	Dartmouth	21-44
N.21	@COLUMBIA	41-7

Coach: Phil Estes
Nickname: Bears
2014 Record: 5-5

BRYANT
Smithfield, RI

S.6	American International	
S.19	@BROWN	
S.26	@COASTAL CAROLINA	
O.3	@MONMOUTH	
O.10	@CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE	31-3
O.17	Duquesne	20-17
O.24	St. Francis (PA)	42-27
O.31	@HOLY CROSS	
N.7	@WAGNER	20-23
N.14	Sacred Heart	7-14
N.21	@ROBERT MORRIS	42-9

Coach: Marty Fine
Nickname: Bulldogs
2014 Record: 8-3

BUCKNELL
Lewisburg, PA

S.5	Marist	22-0
S.12	Duquesne	
S.19	@CORNELL	20-7
O.3	@VMI	42-38
O.10	Lehigh	45-24
O.17	@ARMY	
O.24	Georgetown	22-17
O.31	@LAFAYETTE	27-24
N.7	@FORDHAM	27-30
N.14	Holy Cross	31-24
N.21	@COLGATE	6-21

Coach: Joe Susan
Nickname: Bison
2014 Record: 8-3

BUTLER
Indianapolis, IN

S.5	@INDIANA STATE	
S.12	Franklin	
S.19	@TAYLOR	38-3
S.26	Campbell	9-28
O.10	@MOREHEAD STATE	62-52
O.17	Davidson	
O.24	@DAYTON	14-21
O.31	@MARIST	
N.7	Valparaiso	3-17
N.14	Drake	19-21
N.21	@SAN DIEGO	21-27

Coach: Jeff Voris
Nickname: Bulldogs
2014 Record: 4-7

CAL POLY
San Luis Obispo, CA

S.5	@MONTANA	41-21
S.12	@ARIZONA STATE	
S.19	Northern Iowa	
S.26	@MONTANA STATE	35-27
O.3	Idaho State	28-30
O.10	@EASTERN WASHINGTON	
O.24	Portland State	42-14
O.31	@SOUTHERN UTAH	42-39
N.7	Sacramento State	56-27
N.14	@UC DAVIS	35-48
N.21	North Dakota	

Coach: Tim Walsh
Nickname: Mustangs
2014 Record: 7-5

CAMPBELL
Buies Creek, NC

S.3	Pikeville	
S.12	Chowan	
S.19	@PRESBYTERIAN	
S.26	@BUTLER	28-9
O.3	Drake	
O.10	Marist	20-27
O.17	@STETSON	24-28
O.24	Morehead State	31-24
O.31	@DAVIDSON	28-27
N.7	@SAN DIEGO	
N.14	Jacksonville	19-45

Coach: Mike Minter
Nickname: Fighting Camels
2014 Record: 5-7

CENTRAL ARKANSAS
Conway, AR

S.3	@SAMFORD	
S.12	@OKLAHOMA STATE	
S.26	@NORTHWESTERN STATE	58-35
O.3	Abilene Christian	35-52
O.10	@HOUSTON BAPTIST	70-0
O.17	McNeese State	
O.24	@LAMAR	44-41
O.31	Southeastern Louisiana	24-41
N.7	Stephen F. Austin	49-39
N.14	@NICHOLLS STATE	52-18
N.21	Sam Houston State	31-38

Coach: Steve Campbell
Nickname: Bears
2014 Record: 6-6

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE
New Britain, CT

S.4	Lehigh	
S.12	@STONY BROOK	
S.19	Bowie State	
S.26	@NEW HAMPSHIRE	
O.3	@DUQUESNE	20-28
O.10	Bryant	3-31
O.17	Dartmouth	25-35
O.24	@SACRED HEART	27-35
O.31	Robert Morris	24-27
N.7	St. Francis (PA)	22-17
N.14	@WAGNER	10-20

Coach: Pete Rossomando
Nickname: Blue Devils
2014 Record: 3-9

CHARLESTON SOUTHERN
Charleston, SC

S.3	North Greenville	
S.12	@TROY	
S.17	East Tennessee State	
S.26	@CITADEL	20-18
O.10	Monmouth	27-0
O.17	@PRESBYTERIAN	3-7
O.24	@GARDNER-WEBB	44-14
O.31	Coastal Carolina	22-43
N.7	@KENNESAW STATE	
N.14	Liberty	38-36
N.21	@ALABAMA	

Coach: Jamey Chadwell
Nickname: Buccaneers
2014 Record: 8-4

CHATTANOOGA
Chattanooga, TN

S.5	Jacksonville State	23-26
S.12	Mars Hill	
S.19	@SAMFORD	38-24
S.26	@PRESBYTERIAN	
O.10	Furman	45-19
O.17	@VMI	55-7
O.24	@WOFFORD	31-13
O.31	Western Carolina	51-0
N.7	@MERCER	38-31
N.14	Citadel	34-14
N.21	@FLORIDA STATE	

Coach: Russ Huesman
Nickname: Mocs
2014 Record: 10-4

CITADEL
Charleston, SC

S.5	Davidson	
S.12	Western Carolina	15-29
S.19	@GEORGIA SOUTHERN	
S.26	Charleston Southern	18-20
O.10	Wofford	13-17
O.17	@SAMFORD	17-20
O.24	@FURMAN	42-35
O.31	Mercer	28-26
N.7	VMI	45-25
N.14	@CHATTANOOGA	14-34
N.21	@SOUTH CAROLINA	

Coach: Mike Houston
Nickname: Bulldogs
2014 Record: 5-7

COASTAL CAROLINA
Conway, SC

S.5	@FURMAN	37-31
S.12	@SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	30-3
S.19	Western Illinois	
S.26	Bryant	
O.3	Alabama A&M	
O.10	Presbyterian	40-28
O.24	@MONMOUTH	52-21
O.31	@CHARLESTON SOUTHERN	43-22
N.7	Gardner-Webb	38-14
N.14	Kennesaw State	
N.21	@LIBERTY	14-15

Coach: Joe Moglia
Nickname: Chanticleers
2014 Record: 12-2

COLGATE
Hamilton, NY

S.5	@NAVY	
S.12	New Hampshire	
S.19	Yale	31-45
S.26	@HOLY CROSS	20-17
O.3	@CORNELL	27-12
O.10	@PRINCETON	31-30
O.17	@GEORGETOWN	19-0
O.31	Fordham	13-37
N.7	@LAFAYETTE	16-19
N.14	Lehigh	27-30
N.21	Bucknell	21-6

Coach: Dan Hunt
Nickname: Raiders
2014 Record: 5-7

COLUMBIA
New York, NY

S.19	@FORDHAM	7-49
S.26	Georgetown	
O.3	@PRINCETON	6-38
O.10	Wagner	
O.17	Pennsylvania	7-31
O.24	@DARTMOUTH	7-27
O.31	@YALE	7-25
N.7	Harvard	0-45
N.14	@CORNELL	27-30
N.21	Brown	7-41

Coach: Al Bagnoli
Nickname: Lions
2014 Record: 0-10

CORNELL
Ithaca, NY

S.19	Bucknell	7-20
S.26	@YALE	13-51
O.3	Colgate	12-27
O.10	Harvard	7-24
O.17	@SACRED HEART	
O.24	Brown	16-42
O.31	@PRINCETON	27-38
N.7	@DARTMOUTH	7-42
N.14	Columbia	30-27
N.21	@PENNSYLVANIA	26-34

Coach: David Archer
Nickname: Big Red
2014 Record: 1-9

DARTMOUTH
Hanover, NH

S.19	@GEORGETOWN	
S.26	Sacred Heart	
O.3	@PENNSYLVANIA	31-13
O.10	Yale	38-31
O.17	@CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE	35-25
O.24	Columbia	27-7
O.31	@HARVARD	12-23
N.7	Cornell	42-7
N.14	@BROWN	44-21
N.21	Princeton	41-10

Coach: Buddy Teevens
Nickname: Big Green
2014 Record: 8-2

DAVIDSON
Davidson, NC

S.5	@CITADEL	
S.12	Catawba	7-35
S.26	@MOREHEAD STATE	32-40
O.3	Valparaiso	13-27
O.10	Kentucky Wesleyan	
O.17	@BUTLER	
O.24	Marist	7-38
O.31	Campbell	27-28
N.7	@JACKSONVILLE	0-56
N.14	San Diego	
N.21	@STETSON	34-40

Coach: Paul Nichols
Nickname: Wildcats
2014 Record: 1-11

DAYTON
Dayton, OH

S.5	@ROBERT MORRIS	31-7
S.19	Duquesne	13-33
S.26	Kennesaw State	
O.3	@STETSON	
O.10	San Diego	29-40
O.17	@VALPARAISO	42-19
O.24	Butler	21-14
O.31	Jacksonville	
N.7	@MOREHEAD STATE	41-7
N.14	Marist	31-21
N.21	@DRAKE	30-34

Coach: Rick Chamberlin
Nickname: Flyers
2014 Record: 8-3

DELAWARE
Newark, DE

S.5	Jacksonville	
S.12	Lafayette	
S.19	@VILLANOVA	28-35
S.26	@NORTH CAROLINA	
O.3	William & Mary	17-31
O.10	@RHODE ISLAND	28-13
O.24	New Hampshire	14-43
O.31	@TOWSON	17-24
N.7	Albany	31-28
N.14	James Madison	30-23
N.21	@ELON	34-24

Coach: Dave Brock
Nickname: Blue Hens
2014 Record: 6-6

DELAWARE STATE
Dover, DE

S.5	@LIBERTY	
S.12	@KENT STATE	
S.19	Chowan	
O.3	Morgan State	7-69
O.10	@HAMPTON	0-23
O.17	@FLORIDA A&M	7-41
O.24	South Carolina State	
O.31	Bethune-Cookman	7-27
N.7	@NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL	
N.14	@NORTH CAROLINA A&T	20-33
N.21	Howard	10-17

Coach: Kenneth Carter
Nickname: Hornets
2014 Record: 2-10

DRAKE
Des Moines, IA

S.5	William Jewell	
S.12	@NORTH DAKOTA	
S.19	@SOUTH DAKOTA	
S.26	Stetson	27-15
O.3	@CAMPBELL	
O.10	Valparaiso	17-9
O.17	@SAN DIEGO	14-17
O.24	Jacksonville	14-29
O.31	@MOREHEAD STATE	
N.14	@BUTLER	21-19
N.21	Dayton	34-30

Coach: Rick Fox
Nickname: Bulldogs
2014 Record: 7-4

DUQUESNE
Pittsburgh, PA

S.5	Kentucky Christian	
S.12	@BUCKNELL	
S.19	@DAYTON	33-13
S.26	@ALBANY	
O.3	Central Connecticut State	28-20
O.10	Alderson-Broaddus	48-27
O.17	@BRYANT	17-20
O.24	@ROBERT MORRIS	22-0
O.31	Wagner	13-23
N.7	@SACRED HEART	20-23
N.21	St. Francis (PA)	16-26

Coach: Jerry Schmitt
Nickname: Dukes
2014 Record: 6-6

EAST TENNESSEE STATE
Johnson City, TN

S.3	Kennesaw State	
S.10	Maryville College	

S.17	@CHARLESTON SOUTHERN	
S.26	Emory & Henry	
O.3	St. Francis (Pa.)	
O.17	@MERCER	
O.24	@MONTANA STATE	
O.31	Warner	
N.7	@ROBERT MORRIS	
N.14	@GARDNER-WEBB	
N.21	College of Faith	

Coach: Carl Torbush
Nickname: Bucs
2014 Record: N/A

EASTERN ILLINOIS

Charleston, IL

S.3	@WESTERN ILLINOIS	
S.12	@NORTHWESTERN	
S.19	Illinois State	15-34
O.3	@AUSTIN PEAY	63-7
O.10	Southeast Missouri State	52-13
O.17	@TENNESSEE STATE	28-3
O.24	Tennessee Tech	41-10
O.31	@MURRAY STATE	48-26
N.7	Jacksonville State	20-27
N.14	@TENNESSEE-MARTIN	16-37
N.21	Eastern Kentucky	33-36

Coach: Kim Dameron
Nickname: Panthers
2014 Record: 5-7

EASTERN KENTUCKY

Richmond, KY

S.3	Valparaiso	
S.12	@N.C. STATE	
S.26	Austin Peay	31-0
O.3	@KENTUCKY	
O.10	Tennessee Tech	31-39
O.17	@SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	33-21
O.24	Tennessee State	56-42
O.31	@JACKSONVILLE STATE	6-20
N.7	Tennessee-Martin	49-24
N.14	@MURRAY STATE	43-36
N.21	@EASTERN ILLINOIS	36-33

Coach: Dean Hood
Nickname: Colonels
2014 Record: 9-4

EASTERN WASHINGTON

Cheney, WA

S.5	@OREGON	
S.12	@NORTHERN IOWA	
S.19	Montana State	52-51
S.26	@SACRAMENTO STATE	
O.10	Cal Poly	
O.17	@IDAHO STATE	56-53
O.24	@NORTHERN COLORADO	26-18
O.31	Weber State	
N.7	Northern Arizona	27-28
N.14	@MONTANA	37-20
N.21	Portland State	56-34

Coach: Beau Baldwin
Nickname: Eagles
2014 Record: 11-3

ELON

Elon, NC

S.5	@WAKE FOREST	
S.12	@GARDNER-WEBB	
S.19	North Carolina A&T	12-17
S.26	Towson	19-21
O.3	@NEW HAMPSHIRE	14-48
O.10	@RICHMOND	10-30
O.17	James Madison	27-59
O.31	@STONY BROOK	3-20
N.7	William & Mary	7-17
N.14	@MAINE	17-24
N.21	Delaware	24-34

Coach: Rich Skrosky
Nickname: Phoenix
2014 Record: 1-11

FLORIDA A&M

Tallahassee, FL

S.5	@SOUTH FLORIDA	
S.12	@SAMFORD	
S.19	@SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	17-34
S.26	Tennessee State	7-27
O.3	@SAVANNAH STATE	24-14
O.10	North Carolina Central	
O.17	Delaware State	41-7
O.31	North Carolina A&T	21-40
N.7	@HAMPTON	
N.14	@MORGAN STATE	9-24
N.21	Bethune-Cookman*	17-18

*At Orlando, FL
Coach: Alex Wood
Nickname: Rattlers
2014 Record: 3-9

FORDHAM

Bronx, NY

S.4	@ARMY	31-42
S.12	Villanova	6-50
S.19	Columbia	49-7
S.26	Monmouth	
O.3	@LAFAYETTE	42-18
O.10	@PENNSYLVANIA	60-22
O.17	Holy Cross	45-16
O.24	Lehigh	48-27
O.31	@COLGATE	37-13
N.7	Bucknell	30-27
N.14	@GEORGETOWN	52-7

Coach: Joe Moorhead
Nickname: Rams
2014 Record: 11-3

FURMAN

Greenville, SC

S.5	Coastal Carolina	31-37
S.12	@VIRGINIA TECH	
S.19	@UCF	
S.26	VMI	15-31
O.3	South Carolina State	7-17
O.10	@CHATTANOOGA	19-45
O.24	Citadel	35-42
O.31	@SAMFORD	0-45
N.7	@WESTERN CAROLINA	17-35
N.14	Mercer	25-20
N.21	@WOFFORD	31-14

Coach: Bruce Fowler
Nickname: Paladins
2014 Record: 3-9

GARDNER-WEBB

Boiling Springs, NC

S.5	@SOUTH ALABAMA	
S.12	Elon	
S.19	Virginia Union	
S.26	@WOFFORD	43-36
O.10	Liberty	0-34
O.17	@KENNESAW STATE	
O.24	Charleston Southern	14-44
O.31	@PRESBYTERIAN	7-14
N.7	@COASTAL CAROLINA	14-38
N.14	East Tennessee State	
N.21	Monmouth	15-31

Coach: Carroll McCray
Nickname: Runnin' Bulldogs
2014 Record: 4-8

GEORGETOWN

Washington, DC

S.5	@ST. FRANCIS (PA)	
S.12	Marist	27-7
S.19	Dartmouth	
S.26	@COLUMBIA	
O.3	@HARVARD	3-34
O.10	Lafayette	21-24
O.17	Colgate	0-19
O.24	@BUCKNELL	17-22
O.31	@LEHIGH	19-27
N.14	Fordham	7-52
N.21	@HOLY CROSS	22-16

Coach: Rob Sgarlata
Nickname: Hoyas
2014 Record: 3-8

GRAMBLING STATE

Grambling, LA

S.5	@CALIFORNIA	
S.12	Bethune-Cookman	23-36
S.19	@ALABAMA STATE	23-37
S.26	Prairie View A&M*	26-20
O.3	@JACKSON STATE	40-35
O.10	Alabama A&M	38-28
O.17	@ALCORN STATE	28-21
O.24	Mississippi Valley State	38-23
N.7	Texas Southern	35-7
N.14	@ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF	63-39
N.28	Southern**	45-52

*At Dallas, TX, **At New Orleans, LA
Coach: Broderick Fobbs
Nickname: Tigers
2014 Record: 7-5

HAMPTON

Hampton, VA

S.5	Kentucky State	
S.12	Richmond	17-42
S.18	Howard*	29-30
S.26	@NORFOLK STATE	13-21
O.3	North Carolina A&T	14-31
O.10	Delaware State	23-0
O.17	@MORGAN STATE	35-38
O.24	@WILLIAM & MARY	14-42
O.31	@SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	10-17
N.7	Florida A&M	
N.14	@SAVANNAH STATE	

*At Washington, DC
Coach: Connell Maynor
Nickname: Pirates
2014 Record: 3-9

HARVARD

Boston, MA

S.19	@RHODE ISLAND	
S.26	Brown	22-14
O.3	Georgetown	34-3
O.10	@CORNELL	24-7
O.17	@LAFAYETTE	24-14
O.24	Princeton	49-7
O.31	Dartmouth	23-12
N.7	@COLUMBIA	45-0
N.14	Pennsylvania	34-24
N.21	@YALE	31-24

Coach: Tim Murphy
Nickname: Crimson
2014 Record: 10-0

HOLY CROSS

Worcester, MA

S.5	@MONMOUTH	
S.19	@TOWSON	
S.26	Colgate	17-20
O.3	Albany	13-14
O.10	Brown	24-27
O.17	@FORDHAM	16-45
O.24	Lafayette	24-14
O.31	Bryant	
N.7	@LEHIGH	27-20
N.14	@BUCKNELL	24-31
N.21	Georgetown	16-21

Coach: Tom Gilmore
Nickname: Crusaders
2014 Record: 4-8

HOUSTON BAPTIST

Houston, TX

S.5	Bethany College	
S.12	Northern Colorado	20-28
S.19	@ABILENE CHRISTIAN	14-59
S.26	@SAM HOUSTON STATE	0-76
O.3	College of Faith	
O.10	Central Arkansas	0-70
O.17	@NICHOLLS STATE	31-21
O.24	Southeastern Louisiana	7-76
O.31	Lamar	14-72
N.14	@STEPHEN F. AUSTIN	27-59
N.21	Incarnate Word	8-31

Coach: Vic Shealy
Nickname: Huskies
2014 Record: 2-9

HOWARD

Washington, DC

S.5	@APPALACHIAN STATE	
S.12	@BOSTON COLLEGE	
S.18	Hampton*	30-29
S.26	Morgan State**	35-38
O.3	Norfolk State	
O.17	@SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	
O.24	@NORTH CAROLINA A&T	22-38
O.31	Savannah State	51-21
N.7	@STONY BROOK	
N.14	North Carolina Central	22-27
N.21	@DELAWARE STATE	17-10

*At Washington, DC, **At East Rutherford, NJ
Coach: Gary Harrell
Nickname: Bison
2014 Record: 5-7

IDAHO STATE

Pocatello, ID

S.5	Black Hills State	
S.12	Portland State	31-13
S.18	@BOISE STATE	
S.26	@UNLV	
O.3	@CAL POLY	30-28
O.10	@NORTH DAKOTA	
O.17	Eastern Washington	53-56
O.24	@SACRAMENTO STATE	44-24
N.7	Montana	
N.14	Montana State	39-44
N.21	@WEBER STATE	46-28

Coach: Mike Kramer
Nickname: Bengals
2014 Record: 8-4

ILLINOIS STATE

Normal, IL

S.5	@IOWA	
S.12	Morgan State	
S.19	@EASTERN ILLINOIS	34-15
O.3	Northern Iowa	41-21
O.10	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	35-21
O.17	@MISSOURI STATE	21-7
O.24	Western Illinois	37-34
O.31	Indiana State	20-18
N.7	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	45-10
N.14	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	44-29
N.21	South Dakota	45-26

Coach: Brock Spack
Nickname: Redbirds
2014 Record: 13-2

INCARNATE WORD

San Antonio, TX

S.5	Texas A&M-Kingsville	
S.12	@MCNEESE STATE	21-41
S.19	Nicholls State	38-20
S.26	@UTEP	
O.3	Northwestern State	12-49
O.10	@SAM HOUSTON STATE	19-40
O.24	Abilene Christian	0-21
O.31	@STEPHEN F. AUSTIN	3-38
N.7	@SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	7-63
N.14	Lamar	20-31
N.21	@HOUSTON BAPTIST	31-8

Coach: Larry Kennan
Nickname: Cardinals
2014 Record: 2-9

INDIANA STATE

Terre Haute, IN

S.5	Butler	
S.12	@PURDUE	
S.19	Southeast Missouri State	
O.3	@MISSOURI STATE	20-18
O.10	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	17-32
O.17	Southern Illinois	41-26
O.24	North Dakota State	17-34
O.31	@ILLINOIS STATE	18-20
N.7	@NORTHERN IOWA	20-19
N.14	Western Illinois	20-34
N.21	Youngstown State	27-24

Coach: Mike Sanford
Nickname: Sycamores
2014 Record: 8-6

JACKSON STATE

Jackson, MS

S.5	@MIDDLE TENNESSEE	
S.12	Tennessee State*	7-35
S.19	@SOUTHERN	28-42
S.26	Texas Southern	15-10
O.3	Grambling State	35-40
O.17	@ALABAMA A&M	14-25
O.24	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	33-30
O.31	@MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE	23-27
N.7	Alabama State	10-26
N.21	@PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	30-48
N.28	Alcorn State	34-31

*At Memphis, TN
Coach: Harold Jackson
Nickname: Tigers
2014 Record: 5-7

JACKSONVILLE

Jacksonville, FL

S.5	@DELAWARE	
S.12	@NEWBERRY	
S.26	@MARIST	16-17
O.3	Morehead State	45-26
O.10	Stetson	30-7
O.17	Edward Waters	
O.24	@DRAKE	29-14
O.31	@DAYTON	
N.7	Davidson	56-0
N.14	@CAMPBELL	45-19
N.21	Valparaiso	

Coach: Kerwin Bell
Nickname: Dolphins
2014 Record: 9-2

JACKSONVILLE STATE

Jacksonville, AL

S.5	@CHATTANOOGA	26-23
S.12	@AUBURN	
S.19	Tennessee State	27-20
S.26	@TENNESSEE-MARTIN	38-14
O.3	Mississippi Valley State	
O.17	@TENNESSEE TECH	49-3
O.24	@AUSTIN PEAY	56-0
O.31	Eastern Kentucky	20-6
N.7	@EASTERN ILLINOIS	27-20
N.14	Southeast Missouri State	49-30
N.21	Murray State	52-28

Coach: John Grass
Nickname: Gamecocks
2014 Record: 10-2

JAMES MADISON

Harrisonburg, VA

S.5	Morehead State	
S.12	Lehigh	31-28
S.19	Albany	31-28
S.26	@SMU	
O.3	Stony Brook	27-24
O.10	@TOWSON	62-7
O.17	@ELON	59-27
O.24	Richmond	55-20
O.31	@WILLIAM & MARY	31-24
N.14	@DELAWARE	23-30
N.21	Villanova	31-49

Coach: Everett Withers
Nickname: Dukes
2014 Record: 9-4

KENNESAW STATE

Kennesaw, GA

S.3	@EAST TENNESSEE STATE	
S.12	Edward Waters	
S.19	Shorter	
S.26	@DAYTON	
O.10	Point	
O.17	Gardner-Webb	
O.24	@LIBERTY	
O.31	Monmouth	
N.7	Charleston Southern	
N.14	@COASTAL CAROLINA	
N.21	@PRESBYTERIAN	

Coach: Brian Bohannon
Nickname: Owls
2014 Record: N/A

LAFAYETTE

Easton, PA

S.5	William & Mary	19-33
S.12	@DELAWARE	
S.19	Princeton	
S.26	@WAGNER	35-23
O.3	Fordham	18-42
O.10	@GEORGETOWN	24-21
O.17	Harvard	14-24
O.24	@HOLY CROSS	14-24
O.31	Bucknell	24-27
N.7	Colgate	19-16
N.21	@LEHIGH	27-7

Coach: Frank Tavani
Nickname: Leopards
2014 Record: 5-6

LAMAR

Beaumont, TX

S.5	Bacone	
S.12	@BAYLOR	
S.19	@SAM HOUSTON STATE	10-42
O.3	@SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	34-61
O.10	Abilene Christian	24-21
O.17	@NORTHWESTERN STATE	
O.24	Central Arkansas	41-44
O.31	@HOUSTON BAPTIST	72-14
N.7	Nicholls State	63-21
N.14	@INCARNATE WORD	31-20
N.21	McNeese State	27-24

Coach: Ray Woodard
Nickname: Cardinals
2014 Record: 8-4

LEHIGH

Bethlehem, PA

S.5	@CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE	
S.12	@JAMES MADISON	28-31
S.19	Pennsylvania	
S.26	@PRINCETON	
O.3	Yale	43-54
O.10	@BUCKNELL	24-45
O.24	@FORDHAM	27-48
O.31	Georgetown	27-19
N.7	Holy Cross	20-27
N.14	@COLGATE	30-27
N.21	Lafayette	7-27

Coach: Andy Coen
Nickname: Mountain Hawks
2014 Record: 3-8

LIBERTY

Lynchburg, VA

S.5	Delaware State	
S.12	@WEST VIRGINIA	
S.19	Montana	
S.26	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	
O.3	@GEORGIA STATE	
O.10	@GARDNER-WEBB	34-0
O.17	@MONMOUTH	34-24
O.24	Kennesaw State	
N.7	Presbyterian	28-7
N.14	@CHARLESTON SOUTHERN	36-38
N.21	Coastal Carolina	15-14

Coach: Turner Gill
Nickname: Flames
2014 Record: 9-5

MAINE

Orono, ME

S.5	@BOSTON COLLEGE	10-40
S.19	@TULANE	
S.26	Rhode Island	20-14
O.3	@RICHMOND	33-20
O.10	@ALBANY	7-20
O.17	Yale	
O.24	Stony Brook	7-19
O.31	@VILLANOVA	20-41
N.7	Towson	27-24
N.14	Elon	24-17
N.21	@NEW HAMPSHIRE	12-20

Coach: Jack Cosgrove
Nickname: Black Bears
2014 Record: 5-6

MARIST

Poughkeepsie, NY

S.5	@BUCKNELL	0-22
S.12	@GEORGETOWN	7-27
S.19	Sacred Heart	7-28
S.26	Jacksonville	17-16
O.3	@SAN DIEGO	16-20
O.10	@CAMPBELL	27-20
O.24	@DAVIDSON	38-7
O.31	Butler	
N.7	Stetson	14-22
N.14	@DAYTON	21-31
N.21	Morehead State	

Coach: Jim Parady
Nickname: Red Foxes
2014 Record: 4-7

MCNEESE STATE

Lake Charles, LA

S.5	@LSU	
S.12	Incarnate Word	41-21
S.19	@STEPHEN F. AUSTIN	16-31
S.26	Mississippi College	
O.3	@NICHOLLS STATE	45-3
O.10	Southeastern Louisiana	9-28
O.17	@CENTRAL ARKANSAS	
O.24	Northwestern State	35-28
O.31	@ABILENE CHRISTIAN	31-20
N.7	Sam Houston State	22-38
N.21	@LAMAR	24-27

Coach: Matt Viator
Nickname: Cowboys
2014 Record: 6-5

MERCER

Macon, GA

S.5	@AUSTIN PEAY	49-21
S.12	Stetson	49-0
S.19	@TENNESSEE TECH	
O.3	Wofford	6-34
O.10	@WESTERN CAROLINA	21-35
O.17	East Tennessee State	
O.24	VMI	27-24
O.31	@CITADEL	26-28
N.7	Chattanooga	31-38

2015 FCS Schedules

N.14	@FURMAN	20-25
N.21	Samford	18-21

Coach: Bobby Lamb
Nickname: Bears
2014 Record: 6-6

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE
Itta Bena, MS

S.5	@NEW MEXICO	
S.12	Southern	13-44
S.19	@ALCORN STATE	9-52
S.26	Alabama State	22-47
O.3	@JACKSONVILLE STATE	
O.10	@PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	19-52
O.17	Texas Southern	16-20
O.24	@GRAMBLING STATE	23-38
O.31	Jackson State	27-23
N.7	@ALABAMA A&M	20-42
N.21	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	14-24

Coach: Rick Comegy
Nickname: Delta Devils
2014 Record: 2-9

MISSOURI STATE
Springfield, MO

S.5	@MEMPHIS	
S.12	Chadron State	
S.19	@ARKANSAS STATE	
O.3	Indiana State	18-20
O.10	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	22-32
O.17	Illinois State	7-21
O.24	@SOUTH DAKOTA	31-12
O.31	South Dakota State	28-32
N.7	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	7-14
N.14	Northern Iowa	24-38
N.21	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	10-45

Coach: Dave Steckel
Nickname: Bears
2014 Record: 4-8

MONMOUTH
West Long Branch, NJ

S.5	Holy Cross	
S.12	@CENTRAL MICHIGAN	
S.19	@WAGNER	21-16
S.26	@FORDHAM	
O.3	Bryant	
O.10	@CHARLESTON SOUTHERN	0-27
O.17	Liberty	24-34
O.24	Coastal Carolina	21-52
O.31	@KENNESAW STATE	
N.14	Presbyterian	12-18
N.21	@GARDNER-WEBB	31-15

Coach: Kevin Callahan
Nickname: Hawks
2014 Record: 6-5

MONTANA
Missoula, MT

A.29	North Dakota State	10-22
S.5	Cal Poly	21-41
S.19	@LIBERTY	
S.26	Northern Arizona	
O.3	@UC DAVIS	42-28
O.10	Weber State	
O.24	North Dakota	18-15
O.31	@PORTLAND STATE	
N.7	@IDAHO STATE	
N.14	Eastern Washington	20-37
N.21	@MONTANA STATE	34-7

Coach: Bob Stitt
Nickname: Grizzlies
2014 Record: 9-5

MONTANA STATE
Bozeman, MT

S.3	Fort Lewis	
S.19	@EASTERN WASHINGTON	51-52
S.26	Cal Poly	27-35
O.3	@NORTHERN ARIZONA	
O.10	Sacramento State	59-56
O.17	@PORTLAND STATE	29-22
O.24	East Tennessee State	
O.31	@NORTH DAKOTA	29-18
N.7	Southern Utah	
N.14	@IDAHO STATE	44-39
N.21	Montana	7-34

Coach: Rob Ash
Nickname: Bobcats
2014 Record: 8-5

MOREHEAD STATE
Morehead, KY

S.5	@JAMES MADISON	
S.12	@VMI	
S.19	Kentucky Christian	
S.26	Davidson	40-32
O.3	@JACKSONVILLE	26-45
O.10	Butler	52-62
O.24	@CAMPBELL	24-31
O.31	Drake	
N.7	Dayton	7-41
N.14	@VALPARAISO	48-47
N.21	@MARIST	

Coach: Rob Tenyer
Nickname: Eagles
2014 Record: 4-8

MORGAN STATE
Baltimore, MD

S.5	@AIR FORCE	
S.12	@ILLINOIS STATE	
S.19	Virginia-Lynchburg	
S.26	Howard*	38-35
O.3	@DELAWARE STATE	69-7
O.10	Savannah State	
O.17	Hampton	38-35
O.24	@NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL	21-20
N.7	@BETHUNE-COOKMAN	
N.14	Florida A&M	24-9
N.21	Norfolk State	14-15

*At East Rutherford, NJ

Coach: Lee Hull
Nickname: Bears
2014 Record: 7-6

MURRAY STATE
Murray, KY

S.3	Kentucky Wesleyan	86-29
S.12	@NORTHERN ILLINOIS	
S.19	@WESTERN MICHIGAN	14-45
S.26	Tennessee Tech	27-30
O.3	@SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	44-41
O.10	Austin Peay	13-20
O.24	@TENNESSEE-MARTIN	38-62
O.31	Eastern Illinois	26-48
N.7	@TENNESSEE STATE	33-46
N.14	Eastern Kentucky	36-43
N.21	@JACKSONVILLE STATE	28-52

Coach: Mitch Stewart
Nickname: Racers
2014 Record: 3-9

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Durham, NH

S.3	@SAN JOSE STATE	
S.12	@COLGATE	
S.19	@STONY BROOK	28-20
S.26	Central Connecticut State	
O.3	Elon	48-14
O.17	@WILLIAM & MARY	32-3
O.24	@DELAWARE	43-14
O.31	Rhode Island	41-14
N.7	Richmond	29-26
N.14	@ALBANY	49-24
N.21	Maine	20-12

Coach: Sean McDonnell
Nickname: Wildcats
2014 Record: 12-2

NICHOLLS STATE
Thibodaux, LA

S.12	@LOUISIANA-MONROE	
S.19	@INCARNATE WORD	20-38
S.26	@COLORADO	
O.3	McNeese State	3-45
O.10	@STEPHEN F. AUSTIN	20-42
O.17	Houston Baptist	21-31
O.24	@SAM HOUSTON STATE	
O.31	Northwestern State	21-48
N.7	@LAMAR	21-63
N.14	Central Arkansas	18-52
N.21	@SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	3-62

Coach: Tim Rebowe
Nickname: Colonels
2014 Record: 0-12

NORFOLK STATE
Norfolk, VA

S.5	@RUTGERS	
S.12	@OLD DOMINION	
S.19	@MARSHALL	
S.26	Hampton	21-13
O.3	@HOWARD	
O.10	North Carolina A&T	
O.24	@BETHUNE-COOKMAN	7-13
O.31	@NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL	14-19
N.7	Savannah State	14-7
N.14	South Carolina State	20-30
N.21	@MORGAN STATE	15-14

Coach: Latrell Scott
Nickname: Spartans
2014 Record: 4-8

NORTH CAROLINA A&T
Greensboro, NC

S.5	Shaw	
S.12	@NORTH CAROLINA	
S.19	@ELON	17-12
O.3	@HAMPTON	31-14
O.10	@NORFOLK STATE	
O.17	Bethune-Cookman	
O.24	Howard	38-22
O.31	@FLORIDA A&M	40-21
N.7	@SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	0-13
N.14	Delaware State	33-20
N.21	North Carolina Central	14-21

Coach: Rod Broadway
Nickname: Aggies
2014 Record: 9-3

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL
Durham, NC

S.5	St. Augustine's	
S.12	@DUKE	
S.19	@FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL	
O.3	Bethune-Cookman	20-34
O.10	@FLORIDA A&M	
O.17	@SAVANNAH STATE	42-14
O.24	Morgan State	20-21
O.31	Norfolk State	19-14
N.7	Delaware State	
N.14	@HOWARD	27-22
N.21	@NORTH CAROLINA A&T	21-14

Coach: Jerry Mack
Nickname: Eagles
2014 Record: 7-5

NORTH DAKOTA
Grand Forks, ND

S.5	@WYOMING	
S.12	Drake	
S.19	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	
S.26	UC Davis	
O.3	@PORTLAND STATE	24-16
O.10	Idaho State	
O.17	@WEBER STATE	12-24
O.24	@MONTANA	15-18
O.31	Montana State	18-29
N.14	Northern Colorado	33-14
N.21	@CAL POLY	

Coach: Bubba Schweigert
Nickname: N/A
2014 Record: 5-7

NORTH DAKOTA STATE
Fargo, ND

A.29	@MONTANA	22-10
S.12	Weber State	24-7
S.19	North Dakota	
O.3	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	27-24
O.10	Northern Iowa	3-23
O.17	South Dakota	47-7
O.24	@INDIANA STATE	34-17
O.31	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	38-10
N.7	Western Illinois	17-10
N.14	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	38-14
N.21	Missouri State	45-10

Coach: Chris Klieman
Nickname: Bison
2014 Record: 15-1

NORTHERN ARIZONA
Flagstaff, AZ

S.5	@STEPHEN F. AUSTIN	
S.12	New Mexico Highlands	62-23
S.19	@ARIZONA	
S.26	@MONTANA	
O.3	Montana State	
O.10	@UC DAVIS	23-21
O.24	Weber State	29-22
O.31	Northern Colorado	17-24
N.7	@EASTERN WASHINGTON	28-27
N.14	Sacramento State	
N.21	@SOUTHERN UTAH	14-22

Coach: Jerome Souers
Nickname: Lumberjacks
2014 Record: 7-5

NORTHERN COLORADO
Greeley, CO

S.5	Western State	
S.12	@HOUSTON BAPTIST	26-20
S.19	@SOUTHERN UTAH	
S.26	Weber State	21-34
O.3	@SACRAMENTO STATE	38-43
O.17	UC Davis	27-21
O.24	Eastern Washington	18-26
O.31	@NORTHERN ARIZONA	24-17
N.7	Portland State	
N.14	@NORTH DAKOTA	14-33
N.21	Abilene Christian	

Coach: Earnest Collins Jr.
Nickname: Bears
2014 Record: 3-8

NORTHERN IOWA
Cedar Falls, IA

S.5	@IOWA STATE	
S.12	Eastern Washington	
S.19	@CAL POLY	
O.3	@ILLINOIS STATE	21-41
O.10	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	23-3
O.17	Western Illinois	27-13
O.24	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	28-31
O.31	South Dakota	27-16
N.7	Indiana State	19-20
N.14	@MISSOURI STATE	38-24
N.21	Southern Illinois	40-21

Coach: Mark Farley
Nickname: Panthers
2014 Record: 9-5

NORTHWESTERN STATE
Natchitoches, LA

S.3	Southeastern Louisiana	22-30
S.12	@LOUISIANA	
S.19	@MISSISSIPPI STATE	
S.26	Central Arkansas	35-58
O.3	@INCARNATE WORD	49-12
O.17	Lamar	
O.24	@MCNEESE STATE	28-35
O.31	@NICHOLLS STATE	48-21
N.7	Abilene Christian	34-10
N.14	@SAM HOUSTON STATE	31-27
N.21	Stephen F. Austin	24-27

Coach: Jay Thomas
Nickname: Demons
2014 Record: 6-6

PENNSYLVANIA
Philadelphia, PA

S.19	@LEHIGH	
S.26	@VILLANOVA	7-41
O.3	Dartmouth	13-31
O.10	Fordham	22-60
O.17	@COLUMBIA	31-7
O.24	Yale	21-43
O.31	@BROWN	13-21
N.7	Princeton	17-22
N.14	@HARVARD	24-34
N.21	Cornell	34-26

Coach: Ray Priore
Nickname: Quakers
2014 Record: 2-8

PORTLAND STATE
Portland, OR

S.5	@WASHINGTON STATE	21-59
S.12	@IDAHO STATE	13-31
S.26	Western Oregon	45-38
O.3	North Dakota	16-24
O.10	@NORTH TEXAS	
O.17	Montana State	22-29
O.24	@CAL POLY	14-42
O.31	Montana	
N.7	@NORTHERN COLORADO	
N.14	Southern Utah	
N.21	@EASTERN WASHINGTON	34-56

Coach: Bruce Barnum
Nickname: Vikings
2014 Record: 3-9

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M
Prairie View, TX

S.5	Texas Southern*	35-37
S.12	@TEXAS STATE	
S.19	Alabama A&M	38-35
S.26	Grambling State**	20-26
O.3	University of Faith	
O.10	Mississippi Valley State	52-19
O.17	@SOUTHERN	24-34
O.31	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	51-23
N.7	@ALCORN STATE	48-77
N.14	@ALABAMA STATE	34-24
N.21	Jackson State	48-30

*At Houston, TX, **At Dallas, TX

Coach: Willie Simmons
Nickname: Panthers
2014 Record: 5-5

PRESBYTERIAN
Clinton, SC

S.5	@MIAMI (OHIO)	
S.12	@CHARLOTTE	
S.19	Campbell	
S.26	Chattanooga	
O.3	@WESTERN CAROLINA	19-14
O.10	@COASTAL CAROLINA	28-40
O.17	Charleston Southern	7-3
O.31	Gardner-Webb	14-7
N.7	@LIBERTY	7-28
N.14	@MONMOUTH	18-12
N.21	Kennesaw State	

Coach: Harold Nichols
Nickname: Blue Hose
2014 Record: 6-5

PRINCETON
Princeton, NJ

S.19	@LAFAYETTE	
S.26	Lehigh	
O.3	Columbia	38-6
O.10	Colgate	30-31
O.17	@BROWN	27-16
O.24	@HARVARD	7-49
O.31	Cornell	38-27
N.7	@PENNSYLVANIA	22-17
N.14	Yale	30-44
N.21	@DARTMOUTH	10-41

Coach: Bob Surace
Nickname: Tigers
2014 Record: 5-5

RHODE ISLAND
Kingston, RI

S.5	@SYRACUSE	
S.12	@ALBANY	20-37
S.19	Harvard	
S.26	@MAINE	14-20
O.3	@BROWN	13-20
O.10	Delaware	13-28
O.17	Richmond	0-37
O.31	@NEW HAMPSHIRE	14-41
N.7	Villanova	21-44
N.14	Stony Brook	14-35
N.21	@TOWSON	13-7

Coach: Jim Fleming
Nickname: Rams
2014 Record: 1-11

RICHMOND
Richmond, VA

S.5	@MARYLAND	
S.12	@HAMPTON	42-17
S.19	VMI	
O.3	Maine	20-33
O.10	Elon	30-10
O.17	@RHODE ISLAND	37-0
O.24	@JAMES MADISON	20-55
O.31	Albany	41-28
N.7	@NEW HAMPSHIRE	26-29
N.14	@VILLANOVA	10-9
N.21	William & Mary	34-20

Coach: Danny Rocco
Nickname: Spiders
2014 Record: 9-5

ROBERT MORRIS
Moon Township, PA

S.5	Dayton	7-31
S.12	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	
S.19	Notre Dame (Ohio)	
S.26	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	
O.3	@WAGNER	0-20
O.10	Sacred Heart	13-52
O.24	Duquesne	0-22
O.31	@CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE	27-24
N.7	East Tennessee State	
N.14	@ST. FRANCIS (PA)	7-40
N.21	Bryant	9-42

Coach: John Banaszak
Nickname: Colonials
2014 Record: 1-10

SACRAMENTO STATE
Sacramento, CA

S.5	Eastern Oregon	
S.12	@WASHINGTON	
S.19	@WEBER STATE	47-31
S.26	Eastern Washington	
O.3	Northern Colorado	43-38
O.10	@MONTANA STATE	56-59
O.17	@SOUTHERN UTAH	42-21
O.24	Idaho State	24-44
N.7	@CAL POLY	27-56
N.14	@NORTHERN ARIZONA	
N.21	UC Davis	41-30

Coach: Jody Sears
Nickname: Hornets
2014 Record: 7-5

SACRED HEART
Fairfield, CT

S.5	St. Anselm's	
S.12	@VALPARAISO	
S.19	@MARIST	28-7
S.26	@DARTMOUTH	
O.10	@ROBERT MORRIS	52-13
O.17	Cornell	
O.24	Central Connecticut State	35-27
O.31	@ST. FRANCIS (PA)	27-30
N.7	Duquesne	23-20
N.14	@BRYANT	14-7
N.21	Wagner	23-7

Coach: Mark Nofri
Nickname: Pioneers
2014 Record: 9-3

SAM HOUSTON STATE
Huntsville, TX

S.5	@TEXAS TECH	
S.19	Lamar	42-10
S.26	Houston Baptist	76-0
O.3	Stephen F. Austin*	42-28
O.10	Incarnate Word	40-19
O.17	@ABILENE CHRISTIAN	38-21
O.24	Nicholls State	
O.31	Texas A&M-Commerce	
N.7	@MCNEESE STATE	38-22
N.14	Northwestern State	27-31
N.21	@CENTRAL ARKANSAS	38-31

*At Houston, TX

Coach: K.C. Keeler

Nickname: Bearkats
2014 Record: 11-5

SAMFORD
Birmingham, AL

S.3	Central Arkansas	
S.12	Florida A&M	
S.19	Chattanooga	24-38
S.26	@LOUISVILLE	
0.10	@VMI	63-21
0.17	Citadel	20-17
0.24	@WESTERN CAROLINA	34-20
0.31	Furman	45-0
N.7	Clark Atlanta	
N.14	@WOFFORD	20-24
N.21	@MERCER	21-18

Coach: Chris Hatcher
Nickname: Bulldogs
2014 Record: 7-4

SAN DIEGO
San Diego, CA

S.5	@SAN DIEGO STATE	
S.12	Western New Mexico	23-17
S.26	@VALPARAISO	32-27
0.3	Marist	20-16
0.10	@DAYTON	40-29
0.17	Drake	17-14
0.24	Warner	
0.31	@STETSON	31-23
N.7	Campbell	
N.14	@DAVIDSON	
N.21	Butler	27-21

Coach: Dale Lindsey
Nickname: Toreros
2014 Record: 9-3

SAVANNAH STATE
Savannah, GA

S.5	@COLORADO STATE	
S.19	@AKRON	
S.26	@BETHUNE-COOKMAN	20-48
0.3	Florida A&M	14-24
0.10	@MORGAN STATE	
0.17	North Carolina Central	14-42
0.31	@HOWARD	21-51
N.7	@NORFOLK STATE	7-14
N.14	Hampton	
N.21	South Carolina State	7-59

Coach: Earnest Wilson III
Nickname: Tigers
2014 Record: 0-12

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE
Orangeburg, SC

S.6	Arkansas-Pine Bluff*	
S.12	Coastal Carolina	3-30
S.19	Florida A&M	34-17
0.3	@FURMAN	17-7
0.10	@BETHUNE-COOKMAN	20-14
0.17	Howard	
0.24	@DELAWARE STATE	
0.31	Hampton	17-10
N.7	North Carolina A&T	13-0
N.14	@NORFOLK STATE	30-20
N.21	@SAVANNAH STATE	59-7

*At Orlando, FL
Coach: Buddy Pough
Nickname: Bulldogs
2014 Record: 8-4

SOUTH DAKOTA
Vermillion, SD

S.5	@KANSAS STATE	
S.12	@UC DAVIS	
S.19	Drake	
0.3	Youngstown State	17-28
0.10	@WESTERN ILLINOIS	29-44
0.17	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	7-47
0.24	Missouri State	12-31
0.31	@NORTHERN IOWA	16-27
N.7	Southern Illinois	10-41
N.14	South Dakota State	14-37
N.21	@ILLINOIS STATE	26-45

Coach: Joe Glenn
Nickname: Coyotes
2014 Record: 2-10

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
Brookings, SD

S.5	@KANSAS	
S.12	Southern Utah	26-6
S.26	Robert Morris	
0.3	North Dakota State	24-27
0.10	Indiana State	32-17
0.17	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	27-30
0.24	Northern Iowa	31-28
0.31	@MISSOURI STATE	32-28
N.7	Illinois State	10-45
N.14	@SOUTH DAKOTA	37-14
N.21	@WESTERN ILLINOIS	59-24

Coach: John Stiegelmeier
Nickname: Jackrabbits
2014 Record: 9-5

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE
Cape Girardeau, MO

S.5	@MISSOURI	
S.12	Southern Illinois	23-50
S.19	@INDIANA STATE	
S.26	Shorter (Ga.)	
0.3	Murray State	41-44
0.10	@EASTERN ILLINOIS	13-52
0.17	Eastern Kentucky	21-33
0.31	Tennessee Tech	26-27
N.7	@AUSTIN PEAY	42-7
N.14	@JACKSONVILLE STATE	30-49
N.21	Tennessee-Martin	31-27

Coach: Tom Matukewicz
Nickname: Redhawks
2014 Record: 5-7

SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA
Hammond, LA

S.5	@NORTHWESTERN STATE	30-22
S.12	Florida Tech	
S.19	@OHIO	
0.3	Lamar	61-34
0.10	@MCNEESE STATE	28-9
0.17	Stephen F. Austin	17-27
0.24	@HOUSTON BAPTIST	76-7
0.31	@CENTRAL ARKANSAS	41-24
N.7	Incarnate Word	63-7
N.14	@ABILENE CHRISTIAN	
N.19	Nicholls State	62-3

Coach: Ron Roberts
Nickname: Lions
2014 Record: 9-4

SOUTHERN
Baton Rouge, LA

S.5	@LOUISIANA TECH	
S.12	@MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE	44-13
S.19	Jackson State	42-28
S.26	@GEORGIA	
0.10	@ALABAMA STATE	28-21
0.17	Prairie View A&M	34-24
0.24	@TEXAS SOUTHERN	30-20
0.31	Alcorn State	24-38
N.7	@ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF	51-36
N.14	Alabama A&M	35-34
N.28	Grambling State*	52-45

*At New Orleans, LA
Coach: Dawson Odums
Nickname: Jaguars
2014 Record: 9-4

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
Carbondale, IL

S.5	@INDIANA	
S.12	@SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	50-23
S.26	Liberty	
0.3	@WESTERN ILLINOIS	34-17
0.10	Missouri State	32-22
0.17	@INDIANA STATE	26-41
0.24	Youngstown State	14-26
0.31	North Dakota State	10-38
N.7	@SOUTH DAKOTA	41-10
N.14	Illinois State	29-44
N.21	@NORTHERN IOWA	21-40

Coach: Dale Lennon
Nickname: Salukis
2014 Record: 6-6

SOUTHERN UTAH
Cedar City, UT

S.5	@UTAH STATE	
S.12	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	6-26
S.19	Northern Colorado	
S.26	Brevard	
0.2	@WEBER STATE	31-28
0.17	Sacramento State	21-42
0.24	@UC DAVIS	
0.31	Cal Poly	39-42
N.7	@MONTANA STATE	
N.14	@PORTLAND STATE	
N.21	Northern Arizona	22-14

Coach: Ed Lamb
Nickname: Thunderbirds
2014 Record: 3-9

ST. FRANCIS (PA)
Loretto, PA

S.5	Georgetown	
S.12	@TOWSON	
S.19	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	23-52
S.26	University of Faith	
0.3	@EAST TENNESSEE STATE	
0.10	Wagner	39-46
0.24	@BRYANT	27-42
0.31	Sacred Heart	30-27
N.7	@CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE	17-22
N.14	Robert Morris	40-7
N.21	@DUQUESNE	26-16

Coach: Chris Villarrial
Nickname: Red Flash
2014 Record: 5-6

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
Nacogdoches, TX

S.5	Northern Arizona	
S.12	@TCU	
S.19	McNeese State	31-16
S.26	@ABILENE CHRISTIAN	35-37
0.3	Sam Houston State*	28-42
0.10	Nicholls State	42-20
0.17	@SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	27-17
0.31	Incarnate Word	38-3
N.7	@CENTRAL ARKANSAS	39-49
N.14	Houston Baptist	59-27
N.21	@NORTHWESTERN STATE	27-24

*At Houston, TX
Coach: Clint Conque
Nickname: Lumberjacks
2014 Record: 8-5

STETSON
DeLand, FL

S.5	Webber International	
S.12	@MERCER	0-49
S.26	@DRAKE	15-27
0.3	Dayton	
0.10	@JACKSONVILLE	7-30
0.17	Campbell	28-24
0.24	@VALPARAISO	
0.31	San Diego	23-31
N.7	@MARIST	22-14
N.14	Ave Maria	
N.21	Davidson	40-34

Coach: Roger Hughes
Nickname: Hatters
2014 Record: 5-7

STONY BROOK
Stony Brook NY

S.3	@TOLEDO	
S.12	Central Connecticut State	
S.19	New Hampshire	20-28
S.26	@WILLIAM & MARY	21-27
0.3	@JAMES MADISON	24-27
0.17	Towson	14-3
0.24	@MAINE	19-7
0.31	Elon	20-3
N.7	Howard	
N.14	@RHODE ISLAND	35-14
N.21	Albany	17-27

Coach: Chuck Priore
Nickname: Seawolves
2014 Record: 5-7

TENNESSEE STATE
Nashville, TN

S.6	Alabama State	21-27
S.12	Jackson State*	35-7
S.19	@JACKSONVILLE STATE	20-27
S.26	@FLORIDA A&M	27-7
0.10	@TENNESSEE-MARTIN	16-21
0.17	Eastern Illinois	3-28
0.24	@EASTERN KENTUCKY	42-56
0.31	Austin Peay	31-27
N.7	Murray State	48-33
N.21	@TENNESSEE TECH	10-7

*At Memphis, TN
Coach: Rod Reed
Nickname: Tigers
2014 Record: 6-6

TENNESSEE TECH
Cookeville, TN

S.5	@HOUSTON	
S.12	@WOFFORD	
S.19	Mercer	
S.26	@MURRAY STATE	30-27
0.3	Tennessee-Martin	10-17
0.10	@EASTERN KENTUCKY	39-31
0.17	Jacksonville State	3-49
0.24	@EASTERN ILLINOIS	10-41
0.31	@SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	27-26
N.14	Austin Peay	41-15
N.21	Tennessee State	7-10

Coach: Watson Brown
Nickname: Golden Eagles
2014 Record: 5-7

TENNESSEE-MARTIN
Martin, TN

S.5	@OLE MISS	
S.10	Bethel	
S.26	Jacksonville State	14-38
0.3	@TENNESSEE TECH	17-10
0.10	Tennessee State	21-16
0.17	@AUSTIN PEAY	37-7
0.24	Murray State	62-38
0.31	@ARKANSAS	
N.7	@EASTERN KENTUCKY	24-49
N.14	Eastern Illinois	37-16
N.21	@SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	27-31

Coach: Jason Simpson
Nickname: Skyhawks
2014 Record: 6-6

TEXAS SOUTHERN

S.5	Prairie View A&M	37-35
S.11	Bacone	
S.19	@ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF	37-38
S.26	@JACKSON STATE	10-15
0.3	Alabama State	3-38
0.17	@MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE	20-16
0.24	Southern	20-30
0.31	College of Faith	
N.7	@GRAMBLING STATE	7-35
N.14	Alcorn State	25-40
N.28	@ALABAMA A&M	45-23

Coach: Darrell Asberry
Nickname: Tigers
2014 Record: 5-6

TOWSON
Towson, MD

S.5	@EAST CAROLINA	
S.12	St. Francis (Pa.)	
S.19	Holy Cross	
S.26	@ELON	21-19
0.10	James Madison	7-62
0.17	@STONY BROOK	3-14
0.24	Villanova	14-42
0.31	Delaware	24-17
N.7	@MAINE	24-27
N.14	@WILLIAM & MARY	14-37
N.21	Rhode Island	7-13

Coach: Rob Ambrose
Nickname: Tigers
2014 Record: 4-8

UC DAVIS
Davis, CA

S.3	@NEVADA	
S.12	South Dakota	
S.19	@HAWAII	
S.26	@NORTH DAKOTA	
0.3	Montana	28-42
0.10	Northern Arizona	21-23
0.17	@NORTHERN COLORADO	21-27
0.24	Southern Utah	
N.7	@WEBER STATE	
N.14	Cal Poly	48-35
N.21	@SACRAMENTO STATE	30-41

Coach: Ron Gould
Nickname: Aggies
2014 Record: 2-9

VALPARAISO
Valparaiso, IN

S.3	@EASTERN KENTUCKY	
S.12	Sacred Heart	
S.19	College of Faith	
S.26	San Diego	27-32
0.3	@DAVIDSON	27-13
0.10	@DRAKE	9-17
0.17	Dayton	19-42
0.24	Stetson	
N.7	@BUTLER	17-3
N.14	Morehead State	47-48
N.21	@JACKSONVILLE	

Coach: Dave Cecchini
Nickname: Crusaders
2014 Record: 4-8

VILLANOVA
Villanova, PA

S.3	@CONNECTICUT	
S.12	@FORDHAM	50-6
S.19	Delaware	35-28
S.26	Pennsylvania	41-7
0.10	William & Mary	35-31
0.17	@ALBANY	48-31
0.24	@TOWSON	42-14
0.31	Maine	41-20
N.7	@RHODE ISLAND	44-21
N.14	Richmond	9-10
N.21	@JAMES MADISON	49-31

Coach: Andy Talley
Nickname: Wildcats
2014 Record: 11-3

VMI
Lexington, VA

S.5	@BALL STATE	
S.12	Morehead State	
S.19	@RICHMOND	
S.26	@FURMAN	31-15
0.3	Bucknell	38-42
0.10	Samford	21-63
0.17	Chattanooga	7-55
0.24	@MERCER	24-27
0.31	Wofford	3-38
N.7	@CITADEL	25-45
N.21	Western Carolina	27-42

Coach: Scott Wachenheim
Nickname: Keydets
2014 Record: 2-10

WAGNER
Staten Island, NY

S.5	@RICE	
S.19	Monmouth	16-21
S.26	Lafayette	23-35
0.3	Robert Morris	20-0
0.10	@COLUMBIA	
0.17	@ST. FRANCIS (PA)	46-39
0.24	@BYU	
0.31	@DUQUESNE	23-13
N.7	Bryant	23-20
N.14	Central Connecticut State	20-10
N.21	@SACRED HEART	7-23

Coach: Jason Houghtaling
Nickname: Seahawks
2014 Record: 7-4

WEBER STATE
Ogden, UT

S.4	@OREGON STATE	
S.12	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	7-24
S.19	Sacramento State	31-42
S.26	@NORTHERN COLORADO	34-21
0.2	Southern Utah	28-31
0.10	@MONTANA	
0.17	North Dakota	24-12
0.24	@NORTHERN ARIZONA	22-29
0.31	@EASTERN WASHINGTON	
N.7	UC Davis	
N.21	Idaho State	28-46

Coach: Jay Hill
Nickname: Wildcats
2014 Record: 2-10

WESTERN CAROLINA
Cullowhee, NC

S.5	Mars Hill	
S.12	@CITADEL	29-15
S.19	@TENNESSEE	
0.3	Presbyterian	14-19
0.10	Mercer	35-21
0.17	@WOFFORD	26-14
0.24	Samford	20-34
0.31	@CHATTANOOGA	0-51
N.7	Furman	35-17
N.14	@TEXAS A&M	
N.21	@VMI	42-27

Coach: Mark Speir
Nickname: Catamounts
2014 Record: 7-5

WESTERN ILLINOIS
Macomb, IL

S.3	Eastern Illinois	
S.12	@ILLINOIS	
S.19	@COASTAL CAROLINA	
0.3	Southern Illinois	17-34
0.10	South Dakota	44-29
0.17	@NORTHERN IOWA	13-27
0.24	@ILLINOIS STATE	34-37
0.31	Youngstown State	30-24
N.7	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	10-17
N.14	@INDIANA STATE	34-20
N.21	South Dakota State	24-59

Coach: Bob Nielson
Nickname: Leathernecks
2014 Record: 5-7

WILLIAM & MARY
Williamsburg, VA

S.5	@LAFAYETTE	33-19
S.19	@VIRGINIA	
S.26	Stony Brook	27-21
0.3	@DELAWARE	31-17
0.10	@VILLANOVA	31-35
0.17	New Hampshire	3-32
0.24	Hampton	42-14
0.31	James Madison	24-31
N.7	@ELON	17-7
N.14	Towson	37-14
N.21	@RICHMOND	20-34

Coach: Jimmye Laycock
Nickname: Tribe
2014 Record: 7-5

WOFFORD
Spartanburg, SC

S.5	@CLEMSON	
S.12	Tennessee Tech	
S.19	@IDAHO	
S.26	Gardner-Webb	36-43
0.3	@MERCER	34-6
0.10	@CITADEL	17-13
0.17	Western Carolina	14-26
0.24	Chattanooga	13-31
0.31	@VMI	38-3
N.14	Samford	24-20
N.21	Furman	14-31

Coach: Mike Ayers
Nickname: Terriers
2014 Record: 6-5

YALE
New Haven, CT

S.19	@COLGATE	45-31
S.26	Cornell	51-13
0.3	@LEHIGH	54-43
0.10	@DARTMOUTH	31-38
0.17	@MAINE	
0.24	@PENNSYLVANIA	43-21
0.31	Columbia	25-7
N.7	Brown	45-42
N.14	@PRINCETON	44-30
N.21	Harvard	24-31

Coach: Tony Reno
Nickname: Bulldogs
2014 Record: 8-2

YOUNGSTOWN STATE
Youngstown, OH

S.5	@PITTSBURGH	
S.12	Robert Morris	
S.19	St. Francis (Pa.)	52-23
0.3	@SOUTH DAKOTA	28-17
0.10	Illinois State	21-35
0.17	South Dakota State	30-27
0.24	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	26-14
0.31	@WESTERN ILLINOIS	24-30
N.7	Missouri State	14-7
N.14	North Dakota State	14-38
N.21	@INDIANA STATE	24-27

Coach: Bo Pelini
Nickname: Penguins
2014 Record: 7-5

New Destinations Coaches

■ Compiled by Will Long, *Assistant Editor*

FCS

SCHOOL	FORMER COACH	NEW COACH
Alabama State	Reggie Barlow	Brian Jenkins
Bethune-Cookman	Brian Jenkins	Terry Sims
Columbia	Pete Mangurian	Al Bagnoli
Delaware State	Kermit Blount	Kenneth Carter
Florida A&M	Earl Holmes	Alex Wood
Missouri State	Terry Allen	Dave Steckel
Montana	Mick Delaney	Bob Stitt
Murray State	Chris Hatcher	Mitch Stewart
Nicholls State	Charlie Stubbs	Tim Rebowe
Norfolk State	Pete Adrian	Latrell Scott
Pennsylvania	Al Bagnoli	Ray Priore
Portland State	Nigel Burton	Bruce Barnum
Prairie View A&M	Heishma Northern	Willie Simmons
Samford	Pat Sullivan	Chris Hatcher
VMI	Sparky Woods	Scott Wachenheim
Wagner	Walt Hameline	Jason Houghtaling
Youngstown State	Eric Wolford	Bo Pelini

Chad Morris, SMU

FBS

SCHOOL	FORMER COACH	NEW COACH
Buffalo	Jeff Quinn	Lance Leipold
Central Michigan	Dan Enos	John Bonamego
Colorado State	Jim McElwain	Mike Bobo
Florida	Will Muschamp	Jim McElwain
Houston	Tony Levine	Tom Herman
Kansas	Charlie Weis	David Beaty
Michigan	Brady Hoke	Jim Harbaugh
Nebraska	Bo Pelini	Mike Riley
Oregon State	Mike Riley	Gary Andersen
Pittsburgh	Paul Chryst	Pat Narduzzi
SMU	June Jones	Chad Morris
Troy	Larry Blakeney	Neal Brown
Tulsa	Bill Blankenship	Philip Montgomery
UNLV	Bobby Hauck	Tony Sanchez
Wisconsin	Gary Andersen	Paul Chryst

New Destinations Players

TRANSFERS ELIGIBLE IN 2015

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Perry Able	UAB	
Dequindre Adams	UAB	
Vernon Adams*	Eastern Washington	Oregon
Austin Aikens	Western Kentucky	South Florida
Justin Akins	Georgia Tech	Middle Tennessee
Donnell Alexander	Colorado State	Akron
Chance Allen	Oregon	Houston
Ervin Alston	UAB	
Stephen Amoako	Oregon	Illinois State
Colin Anderson	UAB	
Trey Anderson*	Pittsburgh	Florida International
Daniel Anousheh	UAB	Coastal Carolina
Ja'Won Arrington	UAB	North Dakota
Jaleel Awini	Air Force	Colorado
Derek Babiash	Arizona	San Diego State
Aaron Bailey	Illinois	Northern Iowa
Bobby Baker	UAB	Georgia State
John Ballis	Kentucky	LSU
James Banks	UAB	
Justin Barlow	Troy	UTSA
Blake Bean	Buffalo	North Texas
Rivers Bedenbaugh	Georgia Southern	South Carolina
Russell Bellomy*	Michigan	UTSA
Khaled Berklin	UAB	
Cameron Blankenship	UAB	South Alabama
Drae Bowles	Tennessee	Chattanooga
Kelton Brackett	UAB	Massachusetts
Stephen Brauchle	Louisiana	Southern Miss
K.J. Brent*	South Carolina	Wake Forest
Connor Brewer*	Arizona	Northern Arizona
Demeitre Brim	Virginia	UCF
Jeremiah Briscoe	UAB	Sam Houston State
Devon Brown	UAB	Old Dominion
Tommy Brown	Ohio State	Akron
Kameron Bryant*	Appalachian State	Campbell
Charles Burks*	USC	
Roscoe Byrd	UAB	Georgia Southern
Desman Carter	UAB	Montana State
Ruben Carter	Florida State	Toledo
Ryan Carter	Ohio State	Ohio
Kolney Cassel	SMU	Sacramento State
David Catalano*	San Jose State	Arizona
Chad Chalich	Idaho	Montana
Destin Challenger	UAB	
Tra'Von Chapman	Pittsburgh	Akron
Austin Chipoletti	UAB	
Ahmad Christian	South Carolina	Utah
Devin Church	Illinois	Eastern Illinois
Cody Clements	UAB	South Alabama
Josh Clemons*	Kentucky	
Reggie Coates	Nevada	Washington State

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Rodney Coe	Iowa State	Akron
Cameron Coffman	Indiana	Wyoming
Jalen Coleman	UAB	
Dylan Collie	BYU	Hawaii
Jordan Collier	UAB	Buffalo
Devin Cook*	Pittsburgh	Richmond
Anthony Covington	Appalachian State	Charlotte
Brandon Cox	Arkansas State	Central Arkansas
Devin Crayton	Navy	UTSA
Tevin Crews	UAB	
D.J. Crook	Penn State	Albany
Uneik Crumbley	UAB	Albany State
Aaron Curry	Nebraska	TCU
Kain Daub	Florida State	East Mississippi CC
Demarco Davis	UAB	Georgia State
Kevin Davis	Indiana	Eastern Michigan
Dalyn Dawkins	Purdue	Colorado State
Blake Dees	Texas Tech	South Alabama
D'Vonta Derricott	Kansas State	Eastern Kentucky
Wes Drewery	UAB	Murray State
Jeff Driskel*	Florida	Louisiana Tech
Lee Dufour	UAB	South Alabama
Ryan Dunn	Arizona	San Diego State
Derek Edinburgh Jr.	LSU	Louisiana Tech
Kingsley Ejike	UAB	Kennesaw State
Aderius Epps	Kansas State	North Texas
Gerald Everett	UAB	South Alabama
Zorrell Ezell	Baylor	Houston
LaMarcus Farmer	UAB	Troy
Stevie Farmer	UAB	
Riley Ferguson	Tennessee	Coffeyville CC
Tyler Ferguson	Penn State	Louisville
Kylie Fitts	UCLA	Utah
Matt Floyd	South Florida	South Alabama
Kelepi Folau	UAB	Georgia State
Jai Franklin	Old Dominion	Morgan State
Brandon Fuller	UAB	
Jake Ganus	UAB	Georgia
Colin Goebel	Iowa	Cal Poly
Isaiah Golden	Texas A&M	McNeese State
J.J. Green	UAB	
Kamel Greene	Washington State	BYU
Kevin Griffin	Washington State	Cal Poly
Ty Griffin	Georgia Tech	Oregon
Nate Grimm	New Mexico State	North Texas
Bryant Gross-Armiento	Rutgers	Wake Forest
Rami Hammad	Texas	Baylor
Cameron Hampton	Texas	Lamar
Josh Harvey-Clemons	Georgia	Louisville
Marqui Hawkins	UAB	Indiana
Matt Hegarty*	Notre Dame	

Bo Hines, Yale

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Charlie Hegedus	N.C. State	Georgia
Nyiakki Height	UAB	Georgia State
Keith Heitzman*	Michigan	
James Henry	Toledo	Illinois State
Kiy Hester	Miami (Fla.)	Rutgers
Jarek Hilgers	Arizona State	Arizona
Bo Hines	N.C. State	Yale
Damion Hobbs	Oregon	Utah State
Trevor Hodge	Iowa State	Riverside City CC
Kyree Hollis	UAB	Indiana
Larry Hope	Miami (Fla.)	Akron
Rodarius Houston	UAB	
Jordan Howard	UAB	Indiana
Parrish Huddleston	UAB	Tennessee-Martin
Chris Hudson	UAB	Bethune-Cookman
Savon Huggins	Rutgers	Northern Iowa
Jamal Hundley	UAB	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
Vincent Hunter	UAB	Jackson State
Nick Internicola	Rutgers	Florida Atlantic
Nick Jackson	UAB	
Kalen Jackson	UAB	South Alabama
Rashad Jackson	New Mexico	North Texas
Vershad Jackson	New Mexico	North Texas
Davonte James	West Virginia	Kent State
Gerard Johnson	Old Dominion	Norfolk State
Miles Johnson	Oregon	Baylor
Mitch Johnson	UCLA	Washington
Donovahn Jones	Minnesota	North Carolina A&T
Kellen Jones*	Clemson	
Malin Jones	Northwestern	Louisville
Nick Jones	Louisiana-Monroe	Trinity Valley CC
Shaq Jones	UAB	
Troy Jones*	Western Kentucky	

MORRIS: LM OTERO / AP; HINES: GERRY BROOME / AP

New Destinations Players

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Josue Joseph	Marshall	Florida Atlantic
Darrian Josey	Hawaii	Massachusetts
Austin Jupe	Baylor	UTSA
Jackson Kaka	New Mexico State	BYU
David Kamara	Ole Miss	Tennessee State
Blake Keller	UCF	Marshall
Sean Kelly	Florida Atlantic	South Carolina
Makani Kema-Kaleiwahe	Arizona	Hawaii
Hunter Kennedy	UAB	Chattanooga
David Kenney	Indiana	Illinois State
Mitch Kimball	Syracuse	Eastern Illinois
Demarcus Kirk	UAB	Georgia State
Demarre Kitt	Clemson	Mississippi Gulf Coast CC
Ryan Krum	UAB	San Diego State
Brendan Langley	Georgia	Lamar
Sebastian LaRue	Texas A&M	Washington State
Michael Leagan	UTSA	Texas State
A.J. Legree	Kentucky	South Florida
Uriah LeMay	Georgia	Charlotte
Kyle Lestrange	UAB	
Kaiwan Lewis*	South Carolina	Rutgers
Collin Lisa	UAB	Buffalo
Julian Little	UAB	
L.J. Liston	Rutgers	Northern Michigan
James Looney	Wake Forest	California
Tajh Lowe	UAB	
Devin Lucien*	UCLA	
Wayne Lyons*	Stanford	Michigan
Ryan Mack*	Louisville	Memphis
Greg Maclin	UAB	Western Kentucky
Josh Magee	UAB	South Alabama
Chris Mangus	Virginia Tech	East Carolina
Josh Manley	Syracuse	Charlotte
Jamal Marcus	Ohio State	Akron
Kyle Marrs	Oklahoma	Houston
Korliss Marshall	Arkansas	Eastern Illinois
Tyler Matthews	TCU	Southern Miss
Baker Mayfield	Texas Tech	Oklahoma
T.J. McCollum	UAB	Western Kentucky
M.J. McFarland*	Texas	UTEP
Alonzo McGee	UAB	Georgia State
Taylor McNamara*	Oklahoma	USC
Kevin McReynolds*	UCLA	Nevada
Rolan Milligan	UAB	Toledo
Mike Mitchell	Ohio State	Texas Tech
Robert Mondie	UAB	Arkansas State
Darryl Monroe*	Washington State	Akron
Jakii Moore	UAB	North Texas
Jarin Morikawa	UNLV	Jackson State
Christian Morris	UCLA	Ole Miss
Jontavious Morris	UAB	Western Kentucky
Rodney Morris	UAB	Tennessee State
Chris Murphy	Arkansas	Cincinnati
Hayden Naumann	UAB	Samford
David Norris	UAB	Richmond
Cole Novak	Texas State	TCU
Bryant Novick	UAB	
Evan Orth	UAB	South Alabama
Bryan Osei*	Temple	
Matthew Oubre	Louisiana-Monroe	Lamar
Kelly Parfitt	UCF	Florida Atlantic
Kyrion Parker	Texas A&M	Garden City CC
T.J. Patterson	Wyoming	Colorado
Scottie Peace	UAB	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
Demaris Peppers	Minnesota	Jackson State
Quincy Perdue	UAB	
Nathan Peterman*	Tennessee	Pittsburgh
Otha Peters	Arkansas	Louisiana
Kenton Petties	UAB	
Shawn Petty	Maryland	Marshall
Steve Pickren	UAB	Chattanooga
Zeke Pike	Louisville	Murray State
Todd Porter	Western Kentucky	Butler CC
Joshua Posley	Cincinnati	Ball State
Darius Powell	UAB	Delta State
Maurice Poyadue*	Fresno State	
Chris Rabb	UAB	
Johnny Ragin III	California	Oregon
Marcus Reaves	UAB	
Hayden Rettig	LSU	Rutgers
Robbie Rhodes	Baylor	Bowling Green
Sam Rice	SMU	North Texas

Shaq Roland, Prairie View A&M

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Jordan Ricks	UAB	
Shaquille Roberson	UAB	
Joseph Roberts	UAB	Jacksonville State
John Robinson	UAB	South Alabama
Ron Robinson	UCLA	Riverside City CC
Dimonic Roden-McKinzy	Minnesota	Hutchinson CC
Na'Ty Rodgers	South Carolina	Iowa Western CC
Jake Rodrigues	Oregon	San Diego State
Andrew Rodriguez	Houston	Utah State
Dalton Rodriguez	Tulsa	Oklahoma
Ronan Rogers	Utah	Tulsa
Shaq Roland	South Carolina	Prairie View A&M
Dillon Root*	Fresno State	
Jake Rudock*	Iowa	Michigan
Victor Salako	UAB	Oklahoma State
Kyle Sappington	UAB	South Alabama
Ja'Quay Savage	Texas A&M	Louisville
Brennan Scarlett*	California	Stanford
Adam Schulz*	Utah	Houston
Brayden Scott	Memphis	NE Oklahoma A&M
Avery Sebastian*	California	Notre Dame
Guillermo Serrano	North Texas	UTEP
Nic Shimonek	Iowa	Texas Tech
Bryant Shirreffs	N.C. State	Connecticut
Zach Sims	UAB	North Alabama
Patrick Skov*	Stanford	
Derek Slaughter	UAB	
David Smith	Oklahoma	Jacksonville State
Josh Smith	UAB	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
Maxwell Smith*	Kentucky	San Diego State
Rick Smith	Arizona State	Boise State
Reggie Spearman	Iowa	Illinois State
Noah Spence	Ohio State	Eastern Kentucky
Jamari Staples	UAB	Louisville
Damore'ea Stringfellow	Washington	Ole Miss
Blaire Sullivan	UTEP	Texas State
Mario Swann	Eastern Michigan	Indiana
Freddie Tagaloa	California	Arizona
T.J. Talashek	UTEP	UTSA
Kent Taylor	Florida	Kansas
Vincent Testaverde	Texas Tech	Miami (Fla.)
Ian Thomas	Rutgers	Western Michigan
T.J. Thorpe*	North Carolina	Virginia
Dee Tolbert	UAB	
Trent Trammell*	BYU	UTEP
Caleb Tucker	Houston	Louisiana-Monroe
Gerald Turner	South Carolina	Charleston Southern
D.J. Vinson	UAB	South Alabama
Nick Vogel	UAB	Southern Miss
Shalin Waterford	UAB	
David Watford	Virginia	Hampton
Nate Weston	UAB	
Dominique Wheeler	Texas Tech	Lamar
Chad Whitener	California	Oklahoma State
Raymone Wiggins	Memphis	South Alabama
Shaq Wiggins	Georgia	Louisville
Darius Williams	UAB	
Duaron Williams	Iowa State	Tennessee State
Ja'Quay Williams	Texas A&M	Louisville
Jarvis Williams	Troy	Eastern Illinois
Derrick Willies	Iowa	Trinity Valley CC
Cam Willis	UAB	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
Donovan Wilson	Georgia Tech	Bowling Green
Ishmael Wilson	Texas A&M	Baylor
Kyle Wilson	Memphis	Coastal Carolina
Max Wittek	USC	Hawaii
Daron Wright	UAB	
Matthew Wylie	Massachusetts	UTSA

TRANSFERS ELIGIBLE IN 2016

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Chasen Andersen	Wisconsin	Utah State
Ziere Banner	UTEP	
Justin Barlow	Troy	UTSA
Kyle Bosch	Michigan	West Virginia
Daquawn Brown	Washington State	Fresno State
Squally Canada	Washington State	BYU
Myles Carr	Fresno State	
Dannon Cavil	Oklahoma	UTSA
Larry Clark	San Diego State	
Hunter Crafford	Penn State	North Carolina
Cedric Dale	Purdue	
Jordan Dascalo	Washington State	
Luke Del Rio	Oregon State	
Mark Dodson	Ole Miss	Memphis
Ukeme Eligwe	Florida State	
Andrew Everett	Old Dominion	
Michael Ferns	Michigan	West Virginia
Darell Garretson	Utah State	
Deon Green	South Carolina	
J.J. Green	Georgia	Georgia Tech
Christian Guzman	USC	
Khari Harding	Auburn	Tulsa
Mason Harris	South Carolina	
Greg Hart	Nebraska	Kentucky
Connor Hayes	Pittsburgh	
Daniel Helm	Tennessee	Duke
Cory Helms	Wake Forest	South Carolina
Charles Henderson	Utah	
Kenny Hill	Texas A&M	TCU
Will Hines	Arkansas	
D'Von Isaac	Western Kentucky	
Adonis Jennings	Pittsburgh	Temple
Rahshead Johnson	USC	
Bryce Jones	Boston College	Akron
Cooper Jones	North Texas	
Conner Krizancic	Minnesota	Ohio
Dallin Leavitt	BYU	Utah State
E.J. Levenberry	Florida State	Connecticut
Courtney Love	Nebraska	Kentucky
Luke Maclean	Pittsburgh	
I'Tavius Mathers	Ole Miss	Middle Tennessee
Clayton Nicholas	Bowling Green	
Lenicio Noble	San Diego State	
Brendan Nosovitch	South Carolina	
John O'Korn	Houston	Michigan
Grady Ollison	Arkansas	
Mitch Parsons	Vanderbilt	Colorado State
Zach Paul	North Texas	
Jihaad Pretlow	Temple	
Kyrin Priester	Clemson	Washington State
Tana Pritchard	Washington State	
Daquall Randall	Western Kentucky	
Kerrick Rhone	Kent State	North Texas
Marcquis Roberts	South Carolina	
Donald Rocker	Western Kentucky	
Tom Rodrick	Connecticut	Massachusetts
Landon Root	Northern Illinois	Kansas State
Mike Ruggles	UTEP	Texas Tech
Marcus Sanders-Williams	Utah	
Derrell Scott	Tennessee	East Carolina
Devian Shelton	USC	
Zach Singer	Kent State	UNLV
LaJaylin Smith	North Texas	
T.J. Thomas	Fresno State	
Marquez Valdes-Scantling	N.C. State	
Freddie Warner	North Texas	
Dutton Watson	North Texas	
Mike White	South Florida	Western Kentucky
Zac Whitfield	North Texas	
Matthew Wylie	Massachusetts	UTSA
Anthony Young	Indiana	Akron

*Graduate Transfer

ROLAND RAINER EHRHARDT / AP

Sporting News

2015 Bowl Projections

By Bill Bender, *Sporting News College Football writer*

National Champion

TCU

Auburn

National Semifinal #1

GOODYEAR COTTON BOWL

TCU

National Championship

University of Phoenix Stadium | Glendale, AZ

Monday, Jan. 11, 2016 • 8:30 p.m.

Ohio State

Ohio State

Capital One ORANGE BOWL

Oregon

National Semifinal #2

2015 Tournament of Roses Parade

NEW YEAR'S DAY

- **ROSE BOWL**
  USC vs. Michigan State
- **SUGAR BOWL**
  Alabama vs. Baylor
- **CHICK-FIL-A PEACH BOWL**
  Florida State vs. Boise State
- **FIESTA BOWL**
  Clemson vs. Georgia

- **CURE BOWL**
  Arkansas State vs. East Carolina
- **R+L CARRIERS NEW ORLEANS BOWL**
  Appalachian State vs. Nevada
- **GILDAN NEW MEXICO BOWL**
  Middle Tennessee vs. Colorado State
- **ROYAL PURPLE LAS VEGAS BOWL**
  Arizona State vs. San Diego State
- **FAMOUS IDAHO POTATO BOWL**
  Bowling Green vs. Utah State
- **RAYCOM MEDIA CAMELLIA BOWL**
  Georgia Southern vs. Toledo
- **MIAMI BEACH BOWL**
  Navy vs. UTEP
- **BOCA RATON BOWL**
  Northern Illinois vs. Rice
- **POPEYES BAHAMAS BOWL**
  Akron vs. Western Kentucky
- **SHERATON HAWAII BOWL**
  California vs. Louisiana Tech
- **ZAXBY'S HEART OF DALLAS BOWL**
  Rutgers vs. Marshall
- **QUICK LANE BOWL**
  Northwestern vs. Boston College
- **ST. PETERSBURG BOWL**
  North Carolina vs. UCF
- **MILITARY BOWL**
  Miami vs. Cincinnati
- **HYUNDAI SUN BOWL**
  Duke vs. Washington
- **INDEPENDENCE BOWL**
  N.C. State vs. Mississippi State
- **NEW ERA PINSTRIPE BOWL**
  Minnesota vs. Virginia Tech

- **NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY BOWL**
  Nebraska vs. Stanford
- **AUTOZONE LIBERTY BOWL**
  Oklahoma State vs. South Carolina
- **RUSSELL ATHLETIC BOWL**
  Texas vs. Notre Dame
- **ADVOCARE TEXAS BOWL**
  Kansas State vs. Ole Miss
- **BELK BOWL**
  Georgia Tech vs. Florida
- **FOSTER FARMS BOWL**
  Iowa vs. Arizona
- **OUTBACK BOWL**
  Michigan vs. LSU
- **BUFFALO WILD WINGS CITRUS BOWL**
  Wisconsin vs. Tennessee
- **LOCKHEED MARTIN ARMED FORCES BOWL**
  Maryland vs. Houston
- **TAXSLAYER BOWL**
  Penn State vs. Missouri
- **VALERO ALAMO BOWL**
  Oklahoma vs. UCLA
- **TICKETCITY CACTUS BOWL**
  West Virginia vs. Utah
- **BIRMINGHAM BOWL**
  Texas A&M vs. Memphis
- **GODADDY BOWL**
  Louisiana vs. Western Michigan
- **FRANKLIN AMERICAN MORTGAGE MUSIC CITY BOWL**
  Louisville vs. Arkansas
- **SAN DIEGO COUNTY CREDIT UNION POINSETTIA BOWL**
  BYU vs. Fresno State

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